
00022570

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

00022570

Digitized with financial assistance from

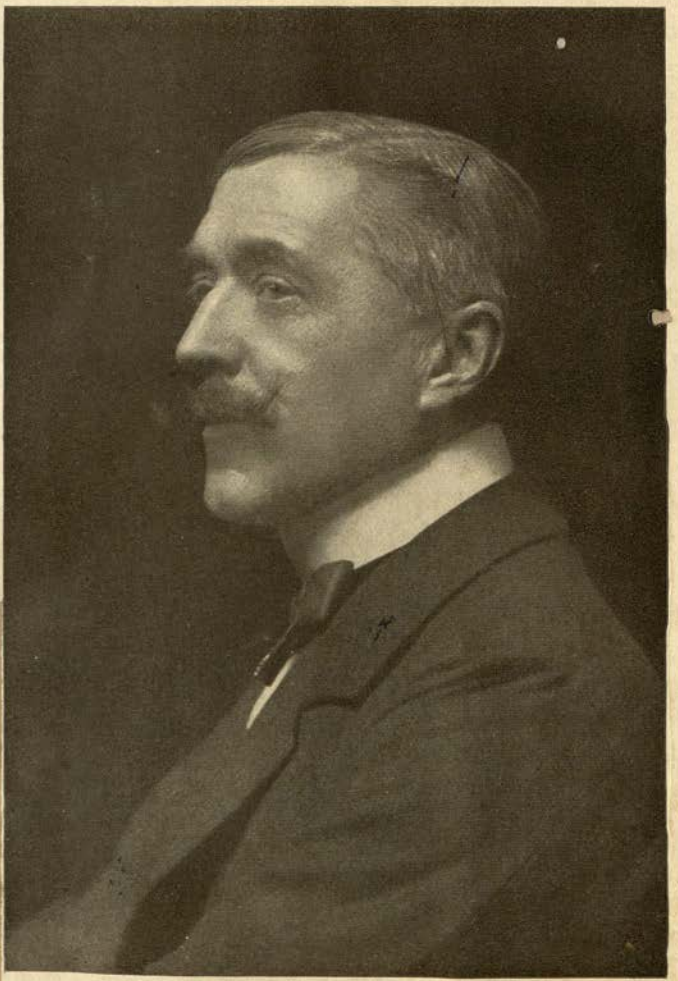


HT Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

My Restless Life



HARRY DE WINDT, F.R.G.S. 1909

Photograph: Lafayette

My Restless Life

By

Harry de Windt

Author of

"A Ride to India"; "The New Siberia"

Etc.

B 861

22570

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

xxle e6

London

Grant Richards

1909

923.5489
Win/My R
22570

DEDICATED

TO

HYLDA

Contents

		PAGE
I.	Early days	11
II.	My first journey	23
III.	In Saráwak (1)	29
IV.	In Saráwak (2)	43
V.	From a Crammer's to Cambridge . . .	61
VI.	Some youthful scrapes and adventures . .	77
VII.	Lively London in the Seventies. My first steeple-chase	88
VIII.	A little racing and some roguery . . .	104
IX.	Two nasty spills. Viâ Melbourne to China. An awkward mistake	120
X.	My first expedition. A French Don Juan. The old Pelican Club	137
XI.	Some wanderings—at home and afar. An interesting blackguard. I meet Madame de Novikoff	156
XII.	Some Siberian prisons. Lavine again. The late Lord Tennyson. Monte Carlo as it was . .	174
XIII.	My "Persian Pick-me-up." A Lost Genius. Ravachol's *café*	189
XIV.	Overrated Japan. Some famous Nihilists . .	207

		PAGE
XV.	A Cockney character. Some recollections of Oscar Wilde. A day with Deibler . . .	226
XVI.	An alluring project. My failure and its sequel. I call on a murderer, and meet an old friend .	243
XVII.	The Klondike boom. Racing in France. Comic-opera conspirators. A familiar face in Aylesbury Prison	270
XVIII.	To New York by land	288
XIX.	Some platform experiences	311
XX.	I lecture in the States	326
XXI.	Some American notes. A narrow escape . .	339
XXII.	I lunch with President Roosevelt. A Russian massacre	350

L'Envoi.

List of Illustrations

Harry de Windt, F.R.G.S. 1909 . . *Frontispiece*

H.H. the Ranee of Saráwak . . *face page* 46

De Clinchamp—De Windt—Harding . „ 296
The first successful Overland Expedition, Paris—New York, 1901-1902

The Author's Portrait, as it appeared on the outer cover of the *Wide World Magazine,* and Caricature of same by Charles Brookfield . . . *face page* 310

"Past Béhring" . . . . „ 314

I

EARLY DAYS

"ARE you related to Peter de Wint, the famous artist?" As this question is asked me by at least two-thirds of the people I meet, I may as well state that we are distantly connected, and that our families both migrated from Holland about a century ago—de Wint's branch of the family to England, and mine to France. On arrival in England the Dutchman removed the penultimate "d" from his surname, why I cannot conceive, unless he feared that his adopted countrymen might find a subject for jest in the two final letters![1] And indeed I frequently suffered from this inconvenience when up at Cambridge! Anyway, the names were originally spelt alike, and we have the same coat of arms: "Four heads proper blowing four winds." A biographer of the painter writes: "The device conveys an appropriate idea of their hereditary instincts which led them to emigrate to various countries,"[2] and in my case, perhaps, this is not incorrect.

I am therefore of Dutch extraction, but have only once been in Holland. This was a few years ago,

[1] It may not be generally known that authentic pictures by the late Peter de Wint were very seldom signed.

[2] *David Cox and Peter de Wint*, by Gilbert R. Redgrave. Sampson Low. London. 1891.

and I was not favourably impressed by my native country, with its dull drab cities, treeless plains, and stagnant canals. The very word "Dutchman" used to convey to my mind an uncouth, phlegmatic personage, not over civil to strangers and addicted to "Schnapps." But this was probably prejudice born of ignorance, and in this respect a visit to Java certainly modified my views. In any case, however, I have always greatly preferred the land of our adoption, France, and my earliest recollections are of that country, and especially of Paris, when she was really the Queen of European capitals, as different from the Paris of to-day as a fair and smiling "débutante" from a cross-grained elderly spinster. I can just remember the place in the late sixties (at a period since immortalized by the pen and pencil of Du Maurier), and I can never read or see the works of that great artist without regretting that the gay and delightful Parisians he loved to draw and describe are now as extinct as the Dodo. *Autres temps, autres mœurs!*

We lived a few miles out of Paris, at the Château of Epinay-sur-Orge, where the solitary village street still bears our name, in white letters on a blue enamel "plaque." My mother had, as a young girl, inherited the place from a French relative, the Vicomte de Rastignac, and shortly afterwards married an Englishman, Clayton Jennyns of the 15th Hussars, who assumed the name of de Windt, and who, after his marriage, wore straight-brimmed hats and huge "nœuds flottants," and otherwise adopted the manners

and customs of France. His "nœuds flottants," by the way, once embroiled their wearer in a duel, for while on a visit to London he was one day walking in Regent Street when a passer-by somewhat rudely drew his companion's attention to the strange-looking necktie. My father instantly demanded an apology, which was refused, and, as the offender happened to be a gentleman, cards were exchanged and a meeting took place with pistols on the French coast, when my father escaping scathless, winged his man, for he was a good shot and had previously been out on two occasions—once in India, and once in Spain, when serving under De Lacy Evans with the Spanish Legion. It was always his wish that I should enter the French army, but this my mother would not hear of, although it was then an infinitely better profession, socially, than it is to-day. I remember being bitterly disappointed at her decision (at the age of six!), for those were the days of brilliant uniforms, and the great reviews at Longchamps with Napoleon III and his glittering staff, and the "Lanciers de l'Impératrice," in their gay sky-blue and silver, had often fired my military ardour. But it was not to be, and subsequent events have proved that, on this occasion at least, Fate was my friend.

At the close of the Paris season we generally went for sea-bathing to Boulogne-sur-Mer, which was not then overrun by the cheap tripper. Indeed, in the early Sixties it was rather an austere, exclusive kind of place, so far as the English were concerned, or

rather one portion of the British community. Amongst others living here at this period I can recall the Wellesleys, Beauclercs, Lethbridges, and a host of other well-known people, not forgetting the elderly but immaculate Dolly Capel, who used to walk about the "Plage" in a black velvet suit and scarlet stockings. There were also English residents of another type who had a separate "clique" of their own, and who, perhaps, inspired the poet when he wrote the lines:

> Beautiful Boulogne! We laud thee in song,
> The home of the stranger who's done something wrong!

But these County Court exiles were mostly gentlefolk, and therefore as quiet and inoffensive as the well-to-do but aggressive Britons, who now frequent the place, are the reverse. The "Etablissement" was then a wooden ramshackle edifice, but it was certainly more amusing and select than the palatial but otherwise vulgar building of to-day.

We rented a house in the Rue des Pipots, where my only sister once had a marvellous escape from death, falling head foremost over the banisters of the third storey on to the marble floor of the hall, forty feet below, yet no bones were broken, and she was practically unhurt! By the way, while living here we used to deal with the baker Coquelin, whose talented sons ("Ainé" and "Cadet") were then in their boyhood. All this happened during the year that cholera was raging in France, and people were actually dying in the streets of Boulogne. I re-

member my disgust at being strictly forbidden to eat raw fruit, especially as peaches and plums were unusually fine, and, owing to the panic, dirt-cheap that season. At last the dread disease became so bad that we all left for Dieppe, which was said to be free from it. Here we stayed at the principal hotel, only to discover the morning after our arrival that a guest had died on the previous night of the malady in rooms adjoining ours. This taught me the folly of running away from an epidemic, and many instances in many lands have since proved the futility of such a proceeding.

But the cholera was only an unpleasant incident in that otherwise happy period, for childhood seldom peers into the future, and I paid no heed to the gathering clouds which were soon to darken the pathway of my life. The storm burst only too quickly, when one day a telegram announced that my father had been killed, during a visit to England, by a fall from his horse. And early in 1870 my mother died, before the declaration of war with Germany. She, therefore, never witnessed the downfall of France, nor the occupation of our beloved "château" by Prussian Uhlans, an incident which appears in one of de Neuville's stirring war pictures. But when this occurred Epinay was no longer ours.

So it came to pass that I was left at the age of fourteen practically alone in the world, for my only sister had married the Raja of Saráwak and was far

away in her Eastern Kingdom, and my elder brother, who died a few years later, had no fixed abode. So my French home was broken up, and I was sent to England to be placed under guardians and the Court of Chancery. Had I gone to Eton or some other public school the whole course of my existence would probably have been changed, but it was decided for some obscure reason to entrust me to the care and tutelage of a west-country parson—an admirable man in his way, and one of whom I still retain a most affectionate memory. But I was his only pupil, and I still shudder at the recollection of the dreary days passed in that remote parish, ten miles from a railway, where the only amusements consisted of an occasional "Penny Reading," or gloomy croquet party! Moreover, I had no companions of my own age, for although my tutor was married, his olive-branches were still in the Nursery. What a hideous contrast to dear old Epinay, with its riding and shooting, theatricals and dances, and gay week-end parties of bright and clever people from Paris!

Poor old S——! He must often have rued the day that brought me into his household, for I was always of a restless nature, and the pastoral simplicity of life in that quiet country parsonage soon got on my nerves and rendered me anything but a pleasant guest. Moreover, I hated work, or rather the eternal Latin and Greek which my tutor regarded as the one aim and end of a gentleman's education.

But the good man had come straight from Oxford to H——, where he had vegetated ever since, and although a distinguished classical scholar his stock of modern learning was nearly as limited as his knowledge of the world. I fancy I could, even at that early age, have taught him a thing or two about French literature! Fortunately the Vicarage possessed a good library, for I have always been a great reader. Dumas, Dickens, and Carlyle were my favourite authors in those days, and I greedily devoured the sporting works of Surtees and Marryat's breezy novels of the sea. There was also a fair collection of works of travel, but these I never cared for, and to this day can never understand how so many of them find favour with the public. It is always gratifying to accomplish a difficult journey, but it must be more than tiresome to wade in print through its prosaic details. However, as I have myself produced works of this nature, I had perhaps better refrain from further comment! Music, of which I am passionately fond, was also a great resource to me, for although never taught I could always play the piano well enough by ear to amuse myself, if not always my hearers!

Life at H—— was so uneventful that only two events now stand out like sunlit islands from that grey sea of monotonous days. One was a consuming passion which I conceived for the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman—a lady of uncertain age, with false teeth and a perpetual smile—and the other

was when, one fine summer morning, my brother turned up at the Vicarage unexpectedly, and took me off to Paris for a few days. How delicious it was to land at Calais and hear the familiar accent once again! And how I enjoyed my "Poulet Chasseur," Burgundy, and "Café Noir" at the Buffet after the heavy joints and stodgy puddings at the Vicarage! I found Paris changed, even in those few months, beyond recognition—for the streets and boulevards now presented a dirty, neglected appearance, and the charred, roofless Tuileries and bullet-riddled pillars of the Rue de Rivoli spoke with silent eloquence of the sad and tragic past. The Palais Royal was a silent spectre of its former bright and busy self, and the once leafy Bois de Boulogne a wilderness of jagged tree-stumps. Only the people appeared the same—indifferent to the past and careless of the future—like true Parisians; and neither the war nor the still more disastrous "Commune" had diminished their instincts of *flâneric* or love of pleasure. So I passed a delightful week, and returned to Wiltshire in a much more cheerful frame of mind than when I had left it; not that I had become more reconciled to my lonely lot, but because I had firmly resolved, whatever happened, to seek fresh fields and pastures new. That trip to Paris had settled it! But when, the morning after my return, I calmly informed the Vicar that, after mature deliberation, I had determined to go to sea on the earliest opportunity, the worthy man fell back in

his chair, and threw up his hands in blank amazement.

"But, my dear boy, you are nearly sixteen, and too old for the Royal Navy," he gasped, and of this fact I was already aware. But shipping notices in the daily paper had informed me that there were vacancies for "midshipmen" on board various fine and commodious merchant vessels bound for all parts of the world. And if Marryat's works were largely responsible for this maritime mania, visions of a roving life in strange lands and a naval officer's uniform (included in the premium) were certainly more so. For I had yet to learn that the ordinary attire of "young gentlemen" in the Mercantile Marine is not gold lace but dirty "dungaree," and that they perform the work of ordinary seamen, by whom they are heartily despised and occasionally kicked. Some years after, in a foreign port, I visited a so-called "midshipman's" berth on board one of these sailing "clippers," and fervently thanked my stars I had never joined the British Merchant Service!

At any rate, I was so persistent in my object that finally my guardians gave way (I think they were growing heartily sick of me), and applied to the Court of Chancery to sanction my apprenticeship to one of Messrs. Green's China tea-ships. The petition was, however, promptly refused on the grounds that I had been amply provided for, and the Court could therefore see no reason why I should swab

decks, grease masts, and perform other menial duties on a "'wind jammer," when I could well afford to enter the army, or any other honourable profession. This, of course, was only common sense, but I regarded it as tyranny, and I am afraid my poor old tutor suffered a good deal in consequence, although he had reluctantly done all he could to further my wild-cat scheme. But I have usually contrived, in this world, to get my own way (perhaps because I have seldom met with serious opposition), and I quickly set to work to devise some other way out of the difficulty—or rather out of H——. The puzzle, however, was unexpectedly solved in the shape of a letter from my sister, to whom I had written some weeks before confiding my despair at the prospect of an indefinite sojourn in that sleepy village. This unexpected missive filled me with joy and eager anticipation, for it contained a suggestion that, as soon as the necessary sanction could be obtained, I should proceed to Saráwak as A.D.C. to my brother-in-law, Raja Brooke.

This time the Vice-Chancellor (I think his name was Bacon) offered no opposition, and one never-to-be-forgotten morning I set out for London with the vicar, who had been selected by the Court to purchase my outfit, a task which, never having travelled further afield than Brighton, he was no doubt eminently fitted for. Fortunately the sum placed at the worthy man's disposal was limited, or I should

have arrived in Saráwak with a whole museum of useless *articles de voyage*, suggested by plausible West End outfitters. My first brief stay in London was most enjoyable, although the place seemed outwardly much less attractive than my beloved Paris, and we stayed at a dingy little hotel, chiefly patronized by the Church, close to Paddington Station. But the month was May and the season at its height, and to me it was novel and delightful to drive about shopping (especially in view of imminent departure), and to wind up the day with an evening at the theatre, generally a blood-curdling drama, which my elderly companion enjoyed as much as I did. I remember how delighted we were with *The Streets of London* and the inimitable Vining as "the Badger," while the evergreen Henry Neville was another stage hero who excited my youthful admiration. There were no smart restaurants, in a modern sense, in those days, and we generally dined at a queer little place in Oxford Street, called "The Scottish Stores," where, though the rooms were dark, and the floor sanded, the cuisine was A1. The place has long ceased to exist, but it convinced me, even at that youthful age, that there is nothing better in the world than really good English cooking—when you can get it; which is now seldom, there being a foolish craze in England for so-called French dishes, which are generally neither one thing nor the other, and play the very deuce with the digestive organs.

At last the eventful day arrived, and I stood on

the deck of the liner which was to bear me away from the land of *ennui* and Latin exercises, to a novel and alluring one of freedom and adventure. The Vicar saw me off at Southampton, which rather marred the pleasure of this golden hour of emancipation, for we had always been good friends, indeed almost comrades, and our parting recalled many acts of kindness which had, I fear, been but poorly repaid by my ungrateful self! And perhaps that is why, although it was a fine clear day, that familiar bowed and sombre figure appeared rather blurred and indistinct as the "Alpha" steamed out of harbour, and my old friend waved me a kindly farewell.

Thus was I launched, at the age of sixteen, on the hazardous highway of life.

II

MY FIRST JOURNEY

OCEAN travel, in these days of floating hotels, is often regarded as a pleasurable experience, but in the early seventies few people embarked, save on business, on a long sea voyage, and no wonder, considering the discomfort it entailed. The Spanish and Oriental Company's s.s. "Alpha,"[1] for instance, in which I made my first voyage, was a small paddle-wheeled vessel which, alongside a Cunarder, would have looked like a diminutive steam-yacht, and the accommodation was little better than that on board a modern ocean "tramp." But, somehow, the passengers never grumbled, possibly because they had never known anything better at sea. We dined at one long table in a tunnel-shaped saloon, with sleeping-berths on either side, the partitions of which were so thin that in stormy weather sounds of suffering often issued from the cabins, much to the annoyance of those seated at table. Personally, I was little inconvenienced, for I have always been a good sailor except on one notable occasion, on board a whaler in Béring Sea, and even then I think the smell of boiling

[1] The names of both ship and company are, of course, fictitious.

blubber was the primary cause of my downfall. On the "Alpha" I shared a cabin about eight feet square with three other unfortunates, and at night the rats ran gaily over our berths and bodies, heedless of missiles hurled by some wakeful occupant. There were only four bathrooms in the ship, and a late riser had often an hour or so to wait for his turn. "Lights out" was sounded at ten o'clock, and half an hour later in the smoking-room, so that the operation of undressing was usually performed in the dark. Breakfast was served at the unholy hour of 9 a.m., and exactly an hour later it was all ruthlessly cleared away.

The captain, a surly old sea-dog, presided over our repasts, while facing him sat the doctor, an elderly Scot, who at meal times strictly confined his attention to the business on hand, and passed the remainder of the day in his cabin with some whisky and a box of cheroots. The purser, on the other hand, was the social light of the ship, a fat, pompous little man, aggressively offensive to all but the fair sex. In the smoking-room, however, he would occasionally unbend and relate spicy anecdotes connected with the British aristocracy, with which, as the narrator resided in a small street off the Brixton Road, he was no doubt intimately acquainted. Unfortunately for ourselves, his constant association with the nobility had presumably dulled this official's professional zeal, for the cuisine on the "Alpha" was as execrable as the wines, which says a great deal.

After dinner, on Sundays, we all had one glass of champagne apiece at the "Company's" expense, a cheap way of showing civility, for no one ever wanted another. There was no *café noir*, which is, in my opinion, the best part of a meal, but weak tea was served after dinner—an early Victorian practice which I trust is now extinct.

All my fellow-passengers were English, of the usual type to be found on a S. and O. steamer, and here I first beheld that wonderful being, the Indian Civil Service official, in all his glory. Being very youthful, I was much impressed by the languid air of superiority assumed by these gentlemen east of Suez, but seldom, for obvious reasons, in their own country, where (as I learnt in later years) they generally seek retirement in the suburbs or some secluded watering-place. There were also Ceylon planters, China merchants, and weird but friendly Australians whom the aforesaid Anglo-Indians affected to regard as social inferiors, but who, nevertheless, bore up wonderfully well under the affliction. Of course there were also ladies on board, old and young (or I should perhaps say middle-aged), but I was then at the hobbledehoy stage of existence which avoids rather than seeks female companionship, and remember little about them.

What I do recall, however, and very vividly, is my first glimpse of Ceylon—not at Colombo, but Point de Galle, where the S. and O. used to call in those days. The little I saw of Egypt was dis-

appointing; and I could quite believe that arid sun-baked Aden was only divided from an even less desirable residence by a sheet of brown paper. But I shall never forget my surprise and delight on landing at Galle in the midst of tropical vegetation, and strolling along a sandy sea-shore fringed by waving palms, and washed by a sea as blue as a sapphire. The Eastern town with its red soil and brightly clad natives, the old Buddhist temple, with its dark aisles and shaven priests, and lastly the subtle, musky perfume of the tropics, everything seemed so strange and unreal that I almost feared it was all a dream from which I should presently awaken in my little white bedroom at the Vicarage. I have wandered, since that day, over most of Asia, from Singapore to the Arctic Ocean and from Persia to the Bering Straits, but I have never struck a lovelier spot than Ceylon—especially the interior of the island, which, in later years, I have frequently visited.

Galle was then as much infested by dealers of precious (and sham) stones as Colombo is to-day; and I witnessed an amusing scene outside the hotel between a persistent paste-monger and one of our passengers who posed as an authority on every conceivable subject, and had therefore been nicknamed "Mr. Know-all."

"What you give for this?" said the dusky merchant, displaying a large, gaudily set stone, suggestive of a Christmas cracker. "Beautiful emerald! I give you cheap—only fifty pounds!"

"Fifty pounds, indeed!" said the Englishman, with a contemptuous smile. "I will give you fifty annas!"

"Tak," was the eager reply, and poor "Know-all" was, on this occasion, worsted, for he could scarcely refuse, in public, to pay for the rubbish he had rashly bargained for.

On the other hand, there were some truly beautiful gems to be picked up dirt-cheap (there are no such bargains nowadays); but by this time I was, metaphorically speaking, "on my uppers." For I regret to say that I am (and always have been) fond of a mild gamble, although I was taught a lesson on board the "Alpha" by a party of subalterns which should have lasted me for life—but didn't. These young gentlemen kindly initiated me into the mysteries of "Loo" and other merry games of chance, with the result that they left the ship at Galle with all the cash allowed me by the Court for expenses on shipboard. At parting, one of my instructors facetiously remarked, that "I knew rather less about cards than a last year's bird's-nest, and had better leave them alone in future"; which piece of advice, seeing that he and his friends had reduced me to one rupee and the 20-franc piece on my watch-chain, seemed somewhat tardy and out of place.

The voyage from Southampton to Singapore occupied thirty-five days (it is now accomplished in a little over three weeks), and I was not sorry

to find the weekly mail-boat on the point of sailing for Saráwak, for Singapore is an unattractive town, and even its best hotel was a very comfortless establishment. So I jumped into a Chinese "sampan" and boarded the steamer "Royalist," which was lying in the roadstead, a spick-and-span little craft, with a genial Scot for a skipper, and comforts of every kind aboard. By sunset we were steaming out to sea, with a two days' run before us to the island of Borneo, or rather the kingdom of Saráwak, which is perhaps not unworthy of a couple of chapters to itself.

III

IN SARÁWAK (1)

MOST people in England have heard of Raja Brooke, and have a vague idea that he discovered (or rather appropriated) a place with an unpronounceable name in Borneo. What happened afterwards is, to the majority, a matter of conjecture, if not of absolute indifference. For instance, tell the ordinary man in a London street that there exists, at the present day, a country nearly as large as the United Kingdom, governed by an English gentleman officially recognized by all Europe and the United States of America as an independent sovereign, and the man in the street will probably set you down as an accomplished liar and pass on. Yet this is no exaggeration, for Saráwak (with the accent on the second syllable) has its own ruler, currency, law courts, army, navy, flag,[1] and postage stamps, just like any other well-regulated nation. But Raja Brooke does not court publicity, and his kingdom has hitherto escaped the argus eye of the *Daily Mail*, which perhaps accounts for the obscurity in which

[1] The Saráwak flag is a black and red cross on yellow ground; the coinage and postage stamps bear the head of the reigning Raja Brooke.

the former is at present enshrouded. I had better, therefore, explain how this unique state came into being, although I shall try to relate its history in tabloid form, and not weary the reader with tiresome statistics.

Briefly, then, James Brooke, the first English ruler of Saráwak, was born near Bath in 1803, and embarked upon his adventurous career in the "East India Company's" service as an ensign endowed with less money than brains. Young Brooke was dangerously wounded (when only twenty-five years old) in the Burmese War, and invalided home to England, whence he shortly afterwards sent in his resignation to the H.E.I.C.S., chiefly on account of ill-health. The ten years or so which elapsed between this period and Brooke's first expedition to Borneo were mainly devoted to European travel, and a voyage to China was also made, by way of the Indian Archipelago, where the oppression and lawlessness then existing on its fertile and beautiful islands first inspired the wanderer with a scheme for their reform and development. For shortly after this (having meanwhile inherited a fortune at the death of his father) we find Brooke purchasing and arming a sailing yacht, in which, after cruising for a couple of years in the Mediterranean to test the staunchness of his vessel and her crew, he once more set sail from the Thames in October, 1838, for far Eastern seas.

Some months elapsed before the "Royalist"

reached Borneo, or rather its province of Saráwak, then in a parlous state, owing to anarchy inland and piracy on the coast. The country was a dependency of Brunei in North Borneo, and Raja Muda Hassim, the Sultan's Viceroy, implored the traveller to assist him to restore order amongst his unruly subjects, which the Englishman, with his well-armed yacht and crew of picked men, was well able to do. Having communicated with Brunei, the native Raja was empowered to sign an undertaking that, as soon as the rebellion was quelled, the Sultan of Brunei should forthwith appoint the European absolute Ruler of Saráwak, subject to a certain royalty payable out of the revenue. Influenced perhaps less by this alluring proposition than an innate love of adventure, the owner of the "Royalist" joined forces with the Raja and all happened as it should: the pirates at sea were punished, the rebels inland taught a salutary lesson, and Muda Hassim was true to his word, although the Sultan, a crafty Malay, did not redeem his promise until two years later. The agreement, however, was eventually carried out, and in 1841 James Brooke was formally installed; the first white Raja, I imagine, in the history of the world.

From this day matters mended, and Saráwak, under a wise and enlightened administration, gradually disclosed the existence of valuable products which had lain fallow under native rule. English

prospectors scoured the country in all directions, with the result that gold, antimony, quicksilver, and coal were discovered and a "Borneo Company" formed in London which, to this day, holds a monopoly of all minerals (with the exception of gold) throughout Saráwak. In 1847 the unique English ruler returned to England and was warmly welcomed by his countrymen, although certain dissentients in the House of Commons affected to regard him (perhaps for political reasons) as an "unprincipled adventurer." It is sad to think that Mr. Gladstone himself was one of Brooke's bitterest opponents, but the latter was able to bear these attacks with equanimity, seeing that he was personally congratulated and knighted by Queen Victoria, and also received the freedom of the City of London in recognition of his efforts in the cause of civilization. These honours, combined with the adulation of an enthusiastic public, might well have produced the disease known as "swelled head" in a less modest, simple-minded man, but the Raja was bored rather than dazzled by worldly pomps and vanities. In less than a year, therefore, he was glad to return to his adopted country, much to the joy of his nati subjects, by whom he was, if occasionally fear already well beloved.

The Saráwak Government had now been streng ened by the acquisition of European officers armed Malay force, and two or three gunbo This was fortunate, for an incident occur

in 1857 which, but for the prompt and decisive action taken by the Raja's nephew, Mr. Charles Brooke,[1] might have led to serious consequences. The trouble was caused by a colony of Chinese which had migrated to Saráwak on the accession of Sir James, and settled a short distance above Kuching, on the Saráwak River, for the purpose of working gold. These men were members of a secret society, and, instigated by its leading members, they arranged to attack Kuching, overthrow the government, and if possible, seize the country. Descending the river, a large and well-armed force reached the capital about midnight. Sir James, already warned by Malays of an attack, had disregarded the report, but roused from his sleep by the yells of Chinamen, he quickly grasped the situation, and seeing that the front of his house was surrounded, the Raja dashed across the lawn at the back, and swam across a stream at the end of the garden, only to fall exhausted on the opposite bank, for he was suffering at the time from a severe attack of fever.

Meanwhile wholesale slaughter was being carried on elsewhere. Mr. Nicholetts, a young officer of nineteen, who had just joined the service, was killed; also an English traveller on a visit to Kuching; while the Resident and his wife were cut down, and the latter left for dead. The children of the police magistrate were hacked to pieces before

[1] Now Sir Charles Brooke the present Raja.

their mother's eyes; and it looked at one time as though every European in the place would be massacred. Finally the rebels attacked the fort, which was then a mere wooden stockade. A desperate resistance was made by the English officer in charge, but seeing at last that he was overwhelmed, he escaped, with a score of Malays, leaving the position in the hands of the enemy.

The Raja had, by this time, been discovered by loyal natives, who conveyed him to the house of the principal Malay chief, where there was shelter and safety. Here Sir James passed the night; and, next day, accompanied by half a dozen Englishmen, he set out on foot through the jungle for the mouth of the Saráwak River, intending to procure canoes, and make his way to a district where a force of Dyaks could be raised to attack and retake the beleaguered city. But Mr. Charles Brooke, (then Resident of a remote outstation), had heard the news, and was already making for the capital with a force of ten thousand men. Of this fact his uncle was of course unaware, and was on the point of putting to sea with his small party, when a steamer was sighted, which proved to be the Borneo Company's steamer "Sir James Brooke," from Singapore. Those on board, of course, knew nothing of the disastrous events at Kuching, to which place the Raja and his followers were soon speeding with all haste, on the vessel which had so opportunely appeared on the scene. The sight of the "Sir James

Brooke" approaching the town created a panic among the Chinese, who were well aware that she carried heavy guns, and these had no sooner opened fire on the bazaar, than the rebels fled in all directions with the intention of crossing into Dutch territory, about twenty-eight miles distant.

But, two days later, the fierce and warlike Dyaks, led by young Brooke, were on the track of the fugitives, and the Chinese, hampered by their women and children, tried in vain to elude their pursuers, with whom in jungle warfare they had no chance whatever. Finally, and after terrible hardships, about sixty exhausted Celestials contrived to reach Sambas, in Dutch Borneo, these being the only survivors of a force of over six hundred men. The insurrection, although it entailed the loss of valuable life and property, served to place the Government on a firmer basis than before, for subjects of every race and creed now realized that their English ruler could be relied upon in the hour of need. Sir James Brooke therefore lived to see his country fairly started on the highway towards wealth and prosperity. During the closing years of his life, failing health compelled the first Raja to pass much of his time in Europe, and the reins of government were then left in the hands of his nephew, who had resigned a commission in the Royal Navy to throw in his lot with Saráwak. Sir James Brooke died in 1868, at Burrator, an estate in Devonshire presented to him by public subscription. The first Raja being

unmarried, the Kingdom of Saráwak was bequeathed to his nephew, Charles Brooke, and his direct heirs, with reversion to the British Crown.

At the time of Sir James Brooke's accession, Kuching, the capital of Saráwak, consisted of forty or fifty dilapidated palm-leaf huts on a mudbank. When, at sunrise one glorious morning, I steamed up the picturesque Saráwak River, the "Royalist" brought me to a town of several thousand inhabitants, with all the accessories of modern civilization. We anchored in midstream, off the Raja's palace, a structure of stone and marble, standing in the midst of beautiful gardens. On the opposite side of the river, Kuching, with its busy wharves and streets alive with Oriental colour; and beyond them, on the outskirts of the town, the white bungalows of Europeans embowered in palms, and dotted amidst the grassy slopes and sombre foliage of the surrounding hills. Further afield, the eye ranged over a vast expanse of forest, terminating, in almost every direction, in precipitous mountain ranges. Wherever I looked, the view was enchanting.

On arrival, I was at once gazetted as A.D.C., and duly arrayed myself in a dazzling uniform, which, to impress the natives, consisted rather less of green cloth than gold lace. I took up my quarters in the palace, and, as may be imagined, under the circumstances, had a very good time. Perhaps fortunately for myself, there was no examination of any kind in those days for the Saráwak Service. The only re-

quirements were pluck, tact, and good manners, for natives are quick to detect the hairy heel in a European. A knowledge of the Malay language was, of course, essential, but this is easily acquired in three or four months. My brother officers were as pleasant and amusing a set of fellows as you could wish to meet, for some had served in crack cavalry regiments at home, others had fought in the American Civil War, and one had been wounded while campaigning with Garibaldi ; while nearly all had knocked about the world, and therefore viewed life under its most interesting and varied conditions.

There was a cheery little club at Kuching, which was not only the favourite meeting-place of men down on leave from the outstations, but a popular rendezvous for residents, for the cuisine and cellar were both admirable. Champagne was the favourite beverage in those days, and a good deal was consumed in that thirsty climate, and at all hours, commencing with an "Aperitif" before the midday breakfast. This was generally partaken of at the Club in question, in a breezy verandah adjoining the English church. One weekday morning a bell began tolling, and H——, the Garibaldian, interrogated a dusky servitor who was removing the gold foil from a long-necked bottle.

"Surely this is not Lent, Pedro?" he asked, being rather hazy, like most of us, as to the religious seasons of the year.

"Oh, no, sir," replied the man, adding, with a

finger on the label, "This is Perrier-Jouet, same as you always have!"

I recollect, on that very morning, a tragedy occurring which threw the whole town into a commotion. An outstation officer, down on leave from the coast, rushed breathlessly into the club, and announced that he had just killed a Chinese merchant in the bazaar by pushing him, in jest, just under the ribs with a walking-stick. But the spot happened to be just over the spleen, which was ruptured, and in a few minutes the Celestial was no more. It may not generally be known that the spleen is the tenderest organ in a Chinaman's body. In after years I saw men fight, near the Great Wall of China, by thrusting at each other with their forefingers, and endeavouring to get in a good blow over the spleen, which was often fatal. This is a popular form of duel in North China, and combatants often train for an encounter by thrusting at a canvas bag, stuffed with rubber, cork, or some other hard but yielding substance, to render the fingers more muscular.

One of my duties was to accompany my Chief upon his daily rides, and I generally bestrode a vicious and iron-mouthed Sumatra pony, with as many tricks as a circus monkey. But it was good practice, for the little beast was much harder to sit than any animal I afterwards bestrode on racecourses in England. Beyond this, I had nothing to do but to copy a few letters in the morning, and enjoy myself during the rest of the day, or rather the afternoon

and evening, for no European who can help it ever ventures out of doors here until the sun has lost its power. Then there was plenty to do in the shape of tennis, bowls, or riding and driving, with perhaps a dinner-party and cards and billiards at the club to wind up the day.

The environs of Kuching would be a paradise to any naturalist, and never have I beheld such a fairy-land of flowers. There were places where the rarest orchids grew like nettles in an English meadow, and where overhanging palms, clear, rushing streams, and brightly hued birds and butterflies, resembled a transformation scene at Drury Lane. You had only to walk into the forest, a mile out of the town, to lose yourself as completely as in a desert island, and, on such occasions, a pocket compass was necessary to find your way back again. Contrast is one of the greatest charms of Saráwak. One night you may sleep in a Dyak house under a bunch of smoke-dried human heads, and the next be dining in the capital surrounded by every luxury. For, within recent years, an increased influx of Europeans has rendered the place anything but dull, especially during the cool season, when the annual race-meeting attracts many people from Singapore, and perhaps a British warship or two from the China Station. The Equator runs right through Kuching, and it is naturally very hot in the daytime, but generally cool at night. Of course, there are discomforts—mosquitoes for one thing, and especially rats, which

swarm in every building. To keep down these pests, a boa-constrictor is sometimes kept between the ceiling and roof of a bungalow; but most people prefer to put up with the annoyance than with this objectionable neighbour. Saráwak is out of the track of earthquakes, but convulsions of nature occasionally occur at unpleasantly close quarters—notably the great earthquake of Manila, and the destruction of the island of Krakatoa, the sound of which, though many hundred miles distant, was plainly heard in Saráwak, where the natives ascribed it to heavy guns being fired at sea.

During the two years I served as A.D.C. I managed to get plenty of leave, which was generally spent in the interior of the island, amongst the world-famed Dyaks of Borneo. Rivers and streams are the highways of Saráwak (except around Kuching, where there are some miles of macadamized road), for elsewhere swamps and dense jungle render travel by land extremely arduous. It is, indeed, often impossible, except along so-called Dyak paths, which merely consist of tree trunks felled in the required direction, now along swampy ground, now across a foaming torrent or dizzy precipice—nasty work for a novice. The first really hard journey of my life was made in 1873, over some thirty miles of this sort of country, from Kuching into Dutch Borneo, and I have never forgotten it. For the trip laid me up for several weeks, and, to this day, my legs and feet bear the scars of festering sores caused by leech-bites.

In Kuching, only Chinese and Malays reside, peaceable and therefore uninteresting races beside the warlike Dyaks, whose head-hunting proclivities have been sadly hampered by the Brooke dynasty, but who are, nevertheless, splendid fellows, born fighters, and as chivalrous as they are brave. The Dyak is generally rather under than over middle height, of a light copper colour, and wonderfully active and wiry. In time of peace he wears only a loin-cloth, but on the warpath, this is replaced by a long deer-skin jacket covered with loose flapping feathers, which, at a distance, give the wearer the appearance of a huge bird. The Dyaks have no firearms, their weapons being the *parang ilang* (a short heavy sword) and a spear, while some of the wilder tribes use the blowpipe with marvellous accuracy. Their women would be pretty, but for a disgusting habit of dragging down the ear-lobes until they nearly touch the shoulders. I once saw a Dyak woman who could put her hand through her ear-lobes with ease, and whose brass earrings each weighed over a pound.

My first journey into the interior was to a fort up one of the great rivers, where my sister (the Ranee) had only lately undergone an unpleasant experience. She had accompanied the Raja on a punitive expedition as far as Simangang, the fort in question, where it was arranged that she should await her husband's return from the scene of operations, about sixty miles further up-river. The invading

force comprised about twelve thousand Dyak warriors and a drilled section of the Saráwak native army, officered by Europeans. A stubborn resistance being expected, every available native was also taken from the fort and village of Simangang, so that the Ranee was left with a Malay chief, over seventy years of age, and her female attendants as sole companions. No trouble was anticipated from adjacent tribes, or my sister would certainly not have remained under such inadequate protection, but although assured that there was no danger, it was with some misgiving that she watched the departure of the fleet of war-canoes, knowing that fully a month must elapse before she saw them again.

IV

IN SARÁWAK (2)

LIFE in a Saráwak outstation is dull and uneventful, and my sister soon began to suffer from its deadly monotony. The fort stood on a high hill overlooking the village, which was now the picture of desolation, being deserted save by a few Chinese traders and the wives and children of those who had departed. There was not even a piano to beguile the time, and the Ranee, having read and re-read her stock of French and English literature, set to work to study Arabic under the tuition of the septuagenarian—who had made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and was, therefore, a learned man. The heat was too great to go out until towards evening, when the lonely European and her aged escort would pace solemnly up and down the strip of road in front of the bazaar, watching the sun set behind the great grey river and darkening hills. A solitary dinner in the gloomy hall of the fort, amidst ghostly shadows and the sound of scuttling rats, ended the day. It was not a lively existence, but one preferable, at any rate, to the startling experience which was to follow.

A month had elapsed since the Raja's departure,

and the inmates of the fort were daily expecting the return of his expedition, when one morning, at daybreak, my sister was awakened by the shouts of men and creak of many paddles, and, assuming that her husband had returned, she ran to the window in eager expectancy. She could perceive a number of war-canoes moored off the landing-place, and crowds of armed men, seated around camp fires in the cool dawn, but the sight filled her with dismay. For a Government force would have made straight for the fort, sure of a friendly welcome, but these men were clearly strangers, allies perhaps of the enemy up-river. Presently the old Malay, also aroused from his slumbers, came running into her apartment, trembling with excitement and apprehension.

"It is Simok and a thousand of his warriors," he cried. "They wish to join the Raja's *ballah*,[1] and demand money. What is to be done?" added the old man, wringing his hands. "He is a dangerous man, Your Highness, and capable of any violence when he knows we are defenceless!"

As he spoke there was a loud clamour below, and, peeping from an embrasure, my sister recognized the chief of a tribe which, only a few months previously, had been severely punished for head-hunting. Simok was now ostensibly loyal, but such a wily, slippery blackguard could never be trusted. The position, therefore, was anything but a pleasant one, but to display anything like fear would only court disaster,

[1] War expedition.

and perhaps death. A shower of blows now resounded from the gateway, and voices were heard loudly demanding admittance.

"Let them enter," said the Ranee; and notwithstanding the protestations, and even tears, of her terrified women, the doors were thrown open, and Simok and a score of his followers swaggered into the room. They were a wild-looking lot, of grim and menacing appearance, with their tattooed faces, streaming black locks, and protruding ears, transfixed with great tiger tusks. Every man was armed to the teeth; the chief, a giant in stature, being clad in a war-cloak of bristling plumes, and heavy brass and copper ornaments, which jangled as he walked. Coarse tufts of hair, shorn from the dead, hung from his shield, and the spear with which he violently emphasized his words. "Had I been a man," naively observed my sister afterwards, "I should have felt very much afraid!" The remark did not impute lack of courage to the male sex, but was merely expressive of a belief in Dyak chivalry, which, upon this occasion, was rather misplaced.

"We are going to join the Raja's *ballah*," began Simok insolently. "There is money in this fort which we need for the journey. You will give it me at once."

"You have nothing whatever to do with the Raja, and I shall not give you one cent," replied the Ranee firmly, but after a moment's hesitation, at the thought that the words might be her last. "My husband has

now been away a month, and may return at any moment. Therefore be careful what you do. Besides, we have guns," she added, pointing to some 32-pounders, and complacently ignoring the fact that there was no one to work them. "You have already had some experience of these."

Simok's eyes blazed with anger, as he advanced in a threatening attitude.

"You forget," hissed the chief, "that I have a thousand men below, and you have none here. Take heed," he added expressively, "this evening, by sunset, that money must be mine. If not——"

But suddenly the words died away upon the speaker's lips, and a look of dismay passed over his features, distorted a moment before by anger and impatience; while, as if at a given signal, every man in the room rushed eagerly to a porthole. A distant sound had caused this sudden stampede, almost a murmur, barely audible above the hum of insects and rustle of leaves. But Simok had already recognized a war-chant, as familiar to the Dyak as its National Anthem to a British crowd. He had heard the well-known "death-wail," which is only sung when these people are returning, laden with ghastly trophies, from a brilliant victory. There could be no doubt about it, this was the punitive expedition; and, moreover, there was no time to be lost, for the sputtering of Chinese crackers in the bazaar was already anticipating the arrival of the Raja and his triumphant *ballah*.

"And now, Simok, if you will take my advice you will escape without delay," said my sister quietly, after a pause; and, on this occasion, the chief and his followers promptly proved themselves obedient, if not loyal, subjects.

It was near this place that I passed my first night in a Dyak house—a novel but scarcely pleasurable experience. They are wooden, palm-roof buildings, seventy to eighty feet long, on posts thirty to forty feet high, and as many as twenty or thirty families sometimes live in one dwelling, which thus forms a village. You enter with difficulty by clambering up a notched wooden pole, which can be drawn up to guard against sudden attack by a hostile tribe. The flooring is of split bamboo, with numerous holes, through which, if not careful, you may easily slip into the mud and filth below, for a low slanting roof renders the interior nearly dark even in broad daylight. One object is always prominent, hanging to a post by the principal doorway—a bunch of smoke-dried heads. The chief always hastened to assure me that they were taken while fighting for the Government, for the Raja still tolerates head-hunting when it is practised under his personal command, but, under any other conditions, death is the penalty.

I only once attended a head-feast, held after a great victory, which took place in a house containing several hundred inmates. The proceedings lasted for three days, during which the incessant beating

of drums and gongs rendered sleep impossible. A score of recently decapitated heads were suspended from a beam in the centre of the house, and these were smoked over a slow fire until the skin assumed the consistency of leather. Huge jars of native *arak* were then produced, and heavy drinking followed, ending in a scene of riot and debauchery. This was the only feast of the kind I ever attended, and I never wish to witness another.

On this occasion I was on a shooting trip, but Saráwak is a poor country for game of any kind. I once shot an orang-outang, and sincerely regretted it ever after, for there was less sport about it (and about as much danger) as potting an English rook. The orang-outang of Borneo is, like the Siberian wolf, a pleasant myth so far as ferocity is concerned. Many people imagine the former as of gigantic size (probably confounding him with the African gorilla), but the largest shot by Mr. Wallace, the famous naturalist, only measured four feet two inches. Dyaks say that their women have occasionally been carried off by these beasts, but I was never able to verify this fact, although I believe it did once occur in Dutch Borneo, the girl eventually returning to her tribe to relate her terrible experiences. When wounded the orang-outang[1] utters a cry exactly like a man, and all his actions are weirdly human. A certain Bishop of Saráwak told the late

[1] A name derived from the Malay words *orang*, "man," and *outan*, "woods."

Canon Henry Kingsley, (who told me), that he was once about to shoot an "orang," but that the animal's face so closely resembled that of a bibulous old friend in England, that he really had not the heart to fire!

Besides orang-outang there was literally nothing to shoot but alligators, which teem in all the Saráwak rivers, so much so that natives in canoes are continually seized by them—even close to Kuching. There is something very repulsive about these brutes, who generally dive with a man and stow him away in a hole for days before returning to devour him. In Borneo alligators vary in size from ten to fifteen feet long, and a sum paid by the Raja for their capture has considerably decreased their number. When the reward was offered, a cunning Malay set up a breeding-farm at the mouth of a river, killed the animals when they grew to full size, and made a lot of money before the fraud was discovered. Talking of alligators, a curious incident occurred while I was in Saráwak. Two Malay children (the eldest a girl of seven) were playing on a mudbank, when an alligator seized the youngest, and made for the water; but the elder child jumped on the former's back and plunged her fingers into its eyes, causing the brute to drop its victim, and bolt back into the stream.

My favourite amusement when in Kuching was bug-hunting, and I made a very fair collection of butterflies—easy enough in Borneo, where you need

only stroll out for an hour with a net and pick up a specimen worth gold in London. There is apparently little connection between butterflies and the supernatural, and yet the former were indirectly responsible for my beholding the apparition of a man who had died three weeks before. For if ever a man beheld a spectre in this world, I certainly saw one on this occasion.

This is what happened. There lived in Kuching a half-caste naturalist, whom I called "Jonah" (though it was not his name), and who generally set up my specimens. On one occasion, when leaving for a trip up-coast, I left a number of butterflies with the old man, stipulating that they should be ready, without fail, on my return, as I wanted them for a lady who was shortly returning to England.

I was back again within a fortnight, at my old quarters in the palace, which, as I have said, lies opposite the town, and across the river, where there is (or was) only one other European building, the fort. About midway between them was the English cemetery, the principal gateway of which stood on the high road. I landed late one evening, and, the Raja and my sister being away, strolled out after dinner with the intention of playing a game of billiards with the Commandant. A tropical moon rendered surrounding objects as clear as daylight, and the porch of the burial-ground was visible some distance away, also a dark figure leaning against the gateway, apparently enjoying a cigar in the cool

night air. This rather surprised me, for the stranger was evidently not connected with either the palace or fort, and no one else lived on our side of the river. I felt no fear, at least as I approached the gate, and gradually recognized the face and figure of old Jonah, but I must confess to a feeling of uneasiness when, as I was about to speak, the figure vanished into thin air. A second before the man had stood before me, so near that I could distinguish certain familiar defects in his well-worn garments; a moment after he was gone—as completely as a pebble cast into the sea.

I do not know that I was actually afraid even then, but in any case I felt disinclined to linger about the spot, so hurried on to the fort to relate what had occurred to the Commandant. "My dear boy," said he, "you must be mad or dreaming. Why old Jonah died of cholera in hospital ten days ago; and, by the way, the Doctor told me he was always babbling about some butterflies he had of yours, and which he left special directions about. But take a blue pill, old man; or you'll be seeing pink rats next!"

I alluded no more to the occurrence, knowing that it would only be received with incredulity, but I can assure the reader that, whatever may be the explanation of the mystery, I saw Jonah, the half-caste, that night, as plainly as the page I now write on.

Many people visited Saráwak in those days on their travels round the world, and those of any note

were generally entertained at the palace. Amongst the latter were Theresa Lady Yelverton—then famous as the heroine of a great lawsuit, who wrote a delightful book (*Teresina Peregrina*) on her Eastern experiences. Another was the late Miss Marianne North, the artist, whose remarkable studies of tropical plants may now be seen at Kew Gardens. This lady was the most indefatigable worker I have ever known, and used to sit for hours at her easel with only a thin white umbrella as a protection against a blazing sun. Messrs. Arthur and Herbert Chamberlaine, the travellers, Signor Beccari and Gifford Palgrave, were other interesting people who visited Kuching while I was A.D.C. Some were rather eccentric in their ways. I shall never forget my sister's horror when a certain distinguished explorer, who shall be nameless, came down to dinner in his pyjamas, and seemed quite hurt when I politely asked him to take them off—or rather replace them with more suitable apparel.

A state visit paid by the Raja to Java gave me an opportunity of seeing a little-known island, which I fancy England must often have regretted parting with for the troublesome African Gold Coast. The Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, with whom we stayed, kept up as much state as the Tsar of Russia, and lived at a place called Buitenzorg, where, by the way, are the most extensive and famous botanical gardens in the world.

Batavia consists of two cities, one Asiatic, the

other European; the first animated, dirty, picturesque; the second quiet, clean, and commonplace. In the former all the business of Batavia is conducted, and here are offices, workshops, and countless forms of Asiatic trade and activity. Here also native pedlars supply thousands of people with their frugal daily meal; and tobacco and areca, or betel-nut. The environs of Batavia are intersected, in Dutch fashion, by canals, bordered with trees; and here, as in Holland, the traveller is occasionally surprised to see the sail of a boat apparently moving across a level plain of grain or verdure.

European Batavia consists of the Governor's residence, and the houses of officials and merchants, situated around the "Koenig's Plein," which, during the English occupation, was used as a racecourse. On one side of this stands a statue of the Netherlands lion, and beneath it an inscription commemorating the victory of the Belgians over the French at Waterloo, the British Army not being mentioned!

I got leave from Buitenzorg and stayed a few days in Batavia, where I had a very good time, for the colonial Dutch are very hospitable. Each room of my hotel was really a little villa, or one-storied bungalow, completely detached from its fellows, with an airy verandah, private bathroom, and other comforts. Thus the hotel was a kind of villa settlement, the bungalows forming three sides of a square around a shady lawn with bright flower beds, a

fourth being reserved for the public rooms and manager's offices. This is no climate for carpets and curtains, so the floors are laid with coloured tiles and the walls bare of everything but whitewash. The occupant of each bungalow could have his meals served in it, and, in fact, live as completely isolated from the main building as though the latter were a mile away. It was the acme of luxury for an hotel, but it needed a healthy appetite to appreciate the Javanese cuisine (which is probably the worst in the world), and the mode of life adopted by the Dutch would speedily wreck an English constitution in this trying temperature. This, for instance, was my daily fare at the "Hôtel des Pays Bas." Breakfast, from six till nine, consisted of sardines, Bologna sausages, eggs, and *cheese*. 12.30: *Ryst tafel*, literally "meal of rice," the latter being the chief ingredient, accompanied by soup, fish, pork, pickled eggs, sardines, and various kinds of savouries, an underdone beefsteak and fried potatoes forming the final *pièce de résistance*. Dinner was precisely the same, with the addition of sweets and dessert. Every one smoked, which I was not sorry for, as it partly counteracted the overpowering fumes arising from these gargantuan repasts. The voracity of the Dutch children almost equalled that of their elders, and I trembled for the safety of one small boy, who appeared to swell visibly during meals, and took a short nap between each course. And yet Dutchmen thrive and live to great ages in

the tropics. Mentally and physically they are born colonizers.

The indoor costume adopted by European ladies in Java is rather startling at first, and when, upon making a call, I was received by a young married woman clad in a clinging silk skirt and loose linen jacket and nothing else, my first impulse was to retire, under the impression that I had interrupted a "toilette." But I was soon laughingly undeceived, and informed that this is the usual attire from early morning until five o'clock in the afternoon, the reception hour. It certainly had one advantage, that of coolness, and on a pretty woman it was distinctly becoming.

We spent a very agreeable three weeks in Java, and returned via Singapore to Saráwak—for which I was not sorry, for the latter is certainly the pleasantest place in that portion of the Far East. A few weeks later the Raja was recalled home on business, and I returned with him and my sister to England.

Saráwak has, no doubt, an important future, for it is now under British protection, although, as I have said, the Raja is recognized as an independent ruler by the King of England and ranks with Indian potentates at the Court of St. James. Many foreign powers have coveted the Raja's kingdom, amongst others Russia. I recollect once at Irkutsk, in Siberia, consulting a map of Asia with the Governor of the Province, who was unaware that

I was in any way connected with Saráwak or had ever visited the country.

"That's a curious place," said the Russian, pointing to it on the map; "it belongs to a private individual, a mad Englishman, I forget his name. Of course, in the event of war with England, we should occupy it at once. There is coal there."

I afterwards related this anecdote to the Raja, who was immensely amused. But my Russian friend was quite right. There *is* coal there (and plenty of it), which would become priceless under certain conditions, but would certainly not benefit Russia or any other foreign country! Besides coal, Saráwak produces gold, antimony, quicksilver, valuable timber, rubber, pepper, sago, and rattans, and last but not least, diamonds, one of the largest in the world (now known as the "Star of Saráwak") having been found there. The prosperity of the place does not advance by leaps and bounds, but that it does steadily improve is shown by comparing the revenue of 1871 with that of 1899 (£30,000 and £181,000 respectively). No English capitalist need fear to invest money here if he will only conform to the usages of the country and deal fairly by the natives. And there is money to be made with a very moderate outlay. Land can be obtained from the Government on favourable terms on the banks of any navigable river, whence produce can be shipped direct to Singapore. There are fortunes to be made in the timber trade alone. This is a country of

innumerable resources, for the poor man as well as the capitalist.

I may as well conclude this chapter with a pen sketch of the present ruler of Saráwak condensed from an interview which appeared a few months ago in the *World*, from the pen of Mr. Raymond Blathwayt. It will also give the reader an idea of Raja Brooke's methods of government, which, up to the present time, have certainly met with gratifying results.

"As Sir Charles Brooke steps forward to bid you welcome, you behold a tall, slight, well-set-up man, upon whose shoulders the weight of seventy-six years bears with inconceivable lightness. His is a handsome face, surmounted by silvery hair, with keen blue eyes and a white moustache, and with a kindly smile continually curving round the firm, well-cut mouth. This is the Raja of Saráwak, and it is a delightful experience to find yourself in interesting converse with one who has been a hero and a figure of romance ever since your schoolboy days.

"Sitting beneath a portrait of Napoleon—there are several portraits of the great soldier in the house—Sir Charles converses without restraint on his experiences as an Oriental ruler. 'I place,' he says, 'complete confidence in my people. I could not govern Saráwak as I do, did I not take their advice on all possible occasions, so more than half the members of the General Council are natives. Some of the old chiefs, who now sit in the Supreme Court

of Justice, have been with me five-and-thirty years, and they know the people in and out. The great thing is to trust natives. Nothing helps to develop them so much. The Dutch in Sumatra and Java have no trust in their natives, and consequently they fail, and always will fail.

"'Trust in my people is the great safeguard of my position. It is easy to govern a country with warships and twelve-inch guns, but I have none of these resources, which makes it very different. And I prefer to govern my natives without them, and to govern alone, for interference would mean the ruin of our peace and prosperity. My government is conducted with patriarchal simplicity; and you would be astonished to see how simply it is all done. I am accessible to all, and the people come to me at any hour of the day. Malays, Dyaks, Hindoos, Chinese, men, women, and children, all come, convinced that they will receive justice at my hands. There are six hundred thousand of them, of whom perhaps fifty thousand are Chinese, and they are divided into many races and nationalities, and each nationality has its own marked characteristics; but the one thing which appeals to them all is that I shall give them my personal attention, advice, and even friendship.

"'We have two large missions in Kuching,' added the Raja, 'a Catholic Mission and a Church of England Mission, and they do excellent work in the way of education; but I do not think Christianity has,

so far, benefited the Dyaks. The Mohammedans, who are very strong with us, are a fine people, and they never try to make converts. I have no fault to find with the Mohammedan religion: it displays no fanaticism in Saráwak; it is generous, reasonable, and admirably adapted to Eastern minds. I allow no one to meddle with my Mohammedan subjects, and I would turn out any missionary neck and crop who attempted to interfere with them.

"'As to the kind of men I prefer to employ in my government service, I lay the greatest stress on the necessity of their being gentlemen, for only these can deal with Dyaks and Malays, who are themselves gentlemen by nature. The conduct of the people is remarkably good nowadays, for out of over half a million of my subjects there are seldom more than two hundred in prison at the same time, and most of these are there for minor offences.'

"We presently visit my host's private museum, which is kept in scrupulous order. The first object to which the Raja draws attention is a giant cobra. 'That was killed in Saráwak,' says he; 'it is fourteen and a half feet in length, the largest ever yet seen.' No less interesting are the model war-canoes of the far-famed Sea-Dyaks. 'Ah!' says Sir Charles, 'you should see these canoes as I once saw them in an expedition, over a hundred, each containing sixty or seventy feather-clad warriors. That was a spectacle worth going any distance to witness.'

"On leaving the museum, the Raja draws atten-

tion to a map of the Indian Archipelago which hangs upon the wall. 'Do you notice,' says he, 'that Saráwak is just opposite to, and only forty-eight hours distant from Singapore, where the English Government is establishing a strong naval base? It may mean everything in the days to come that England should possess a straits of Dover in the Far East.'"

V

FROM A CRAMMER'S TO CAMBRIDGE

On my return to England from Borneo, it was decided that I should enter the British Army; at least, that was the course suggested by my guardians, and one which met with my entire approval, although personally I felt very dubious as to my qualifications for a commission. It never seemed to strike any one else that I had about as much chance of passing a severe competitive examination as a jackass of winning the Derby, for dear old S—— had taught me little beyond a few Greek verbs, the multiplication table, and some Latin exercises; while in Saráwak my studies had been solely restricted to the Malay and Dyak languages. Nevertheless, I was sent to a gentleman in the Clapham Road to undergo the process of "cramming" with three other young gentlemen, also destined for a military career.

Judging from my own experience, I cannot understand how any boy can derive benefit from being sent to a "crammer." The one I went to was said to be unusually strict, and yet I simply did just as much work as I cared to (which was extremely little), and no pressure was ever put on me to do any more. Most of our time was engaged in arraying ourselves in the loudest of check suits (to the disgust of staid

suburbanites), reading the sporting papers, drinking bitter beer, and colouring clay pipes. No wonder I was plucked on the second day of the "preliminary" at Burlington House, and should probably have been discarded on the first had the subject been anything but French, which, of course, I know quite as well as English. Of my fellow-students, one is now an unsuccessful planter, another went utterly to the dogs, and the third, after a brief but meteoric career on the turf, is no more. So that we can hardly claim to have brought much credit to the learned head of "Acacia Lodge, S.W." I should add, however, in justice to the latter, that even had I been studiously inclined (which I was not), no earthly power could have passed me within the brief time during which I was eligible for the army.

We could do pretty much as we liked at Clapham, out of so-called work hours, and spent most of our afternoons in London, at, I fear, not very profitable resorts. I went in a little for rowing and boxing, but my companions had a strong aversion to anything in the shape of athletics. The "Criterion" had then just been opened, and they would spend hours at its long, glittering bar, talking to the doll-like barmaids, consuming countless bottles of pale ale, and trying to look as if they enjoyed it. I cared as little then as I have always done for cricket and football, but race meetings were always an irresistible attraction, and I generally managed to attend such suburban places

as Kingsbury, Croydon, and Windsor—not very high-class sport, but no less enjoyable on that account. Occasionally we would get leave to go to a theatre or music-hall—*Madame Angot* was then all the rage, though when I hear elderly people declare that the comic operas of those times were superior to the musical comedies of the present day, I venture to differ. The music of *Madame Angot* and *Geneviève de Brabant* was certainly inferior to that of, say, the *Geisha* or *Merry Widow*, and the scenery and dresses of the early seventies would bear no comparison with the costly and beautiful stage productions of to-day. Later on, of course, John Hollingshead came to the fore, and the Gaiety burlesques were a vast improvement.

Of music-halls we generally patronized the "Oxford," where my friend the embryo planter knew the chairman, a once popular species of functionary now as extinct as the ark. We were sometimes graciously invited to sit next to this celebrity (a bald, red-faced man, with fiercely waxed moustaches, and diamonds in his shirt-front), who presided at the end of a crowded table and announced each artist in a stentorian voice, emphasized by a stern frown and loud raps with an ivory mallet. "Ladies and gentlemen! Miss Lydia Lonsdale, the beautiful and world-famed serio-comique, will now appear"; and a tawdry female, of mature years, would simper down to the foot-

lights. Then our host would sink wearily back in his chair, and smile once more upon his satellites with the air of a man who has accomplished an important public duty. When a "turn" was proceeding, our friend would be bombarded with free drinks and cigars, and I have never seen a human being—even in the far west of America—upon whom great quantities of alcohol produced so little effect. But I believe these men were selected on account of their drinking powers, which were, of course, all for the good of the house. Music-halls in those days were much less amusing than they are now, and I generally adjourned before the show was over to Evans's, in Covent Garden, to discuss Welsh rarebit and shandygaff, while listening to glees and madrigals sung by pale-faced little boys who looked as if they ought to be in bed. And so home, after a weary tramp down to Westminster Bridge, (it did not run to a cab!), and thence by tramcar to Clapham, where a good half-hour was usually spent on the doorstep—latchkeys being prohibited and every one having retired for the night.

My friend the embryo planter had a host of friends in London—some ultra-respectable, others distinctly the reverse. Amongst the latter was the famous Arthur Orton, claimant to the Tichborne estates, who was afterwards sentenced to a long term of penal servitude. But at this time "Sir Roger" was at his zenith, and we used to visit him

at the Waterloo Hotel in Jermyn Street, where he generally received us in a kind of snuggery behind the bar. I can see him now, lolling on a horsehair sofa (which for years afterwards bore the imprint of his massive frame), smoking an enormous cigar, and refreshing himself at frequent intervals from the brandy and soda which invariably stood at his elbow. Orton was an extremely pleasant man to meet—quiet and courteous in manner, and with a singularly low, musical voice, although I occasionally caught a quaint accent which might have been either Cockney or Australian. The claimant seemed interested when I told him I came from France, but although I started a conversation in French he did not respond—probably for a very good reason—his ignorance of the language in question being a trump card of the prosecution. This was only a few weeks before the final fiasco, but the famous trial had then been going on for nearly three years.

Whatever Arthur Orton may have been, he could certainly behave like a gentleman, the only discordant notes being the slight accent I have mentioned and his taste for flashy jewellery. His fat, white hands sparkled with great rubies and sapphires, and even in the daytime large diamond studs glistened in his shirt-front. But he was excellent company even to boys like ourselves, and he once gave me the biggest cigar I ever saw—which I kept for years afterwards—as a souvenir of the "unhappy nobleman languishing in Dartmoor." I must own

I was sincerely sorry when he was convicted. Some years later in China I met Captain Orton, who was said to be Arthur's brother, and who commanded a tramp steamer out of Singapore, but there was not the slightest resemblance between the two. I am convinced that there was some mystery about the claimant's birth; he may have hailed from Wapping, but I would stake a good deal that one of his parents, at least, was well born.

My attempt to serve Her Majesty having been nipped in the bud, and two years having yet to elapse before my majority, I once more consulted my unhappy guardians and through them obtained leave of the Court to put in the remainder of my minority at Cambridge University. Matriculation I felt tolerably confident about, and that, after all, was the chief point. And even this minor ordeal was easier than usual at the home of learning I had selected. Anent the latter a tale is told of a certain Cambridge Don who was asked to advise a friend's son as to the choice of a college. The youth duly arrived at the University for inspection, and the following conversation took place.

"How are you in classics, Mr. ——?" inquired the Don.

"Well, sir, I am afraid I have not done much that way beyond Latin nouns and the first few pages of *Delectus*. I don't know any Greek."

"Humph! And what about mathematics?"

"I can say the multiplication table up to nine,

and add up to a hundred; but somehow or other division is a little beyond—my——"

"What in heaven's name *can* you do, sir?" at last cried the Don, losing all patience. "I suppose you can play cricket, or row, or, at any rate, ride?"

The youth's face lit up. "Never handled a bat or pulled an oar in my life, sir; but I rode two winners at hunt meetings last season, and have just won our Point to Point Steeplechase at home—and I hope to——"

"Quite so—quite so," broke in the Don. "You need say no more, sir; I shall certainly advise your father to send you to Magdalene!"

Yet I would wager that the Don (in common with most of his kind) had a soft spot in his heart for the little college which has produced some of the finest horsemen in the world, amongst others Mr. J. M. Richardson, who in 1873 and 1874 steered Disturbance and Reugny to victory in the Liverpool Grand National. When I went up to Cambridge Magdalene was essentially a riding college, and certainly not a reading one. I suppose there were reading men, (there must have been, for it was whispered that Magdalene once produced a Wrangler!), but I never saw them. Also to row or even play cricket was to be ostracized by the right set, who, in my time, included such good sportsmen as E. H. Baldock, Lewis ("Peter") Flower, Hatfeild Harter, Lord Kesteven, Sydney Stern (now Lord Wandsworth),

the Hon. Gilly Leigh, Henry Bunbury, Sammy Nicholson, George Lancaster, Claud Thornhill, and last but not least my poor friend Billy Hoole, who was killed about that time while riding a steeplechase at St. Ives.

I am afraid I did not learn much at "Alma Mater," at any rate of a profitable kind, but I certainly passed a remarkably pleasant time there, and formed friendships which have endured to this day. Nor were my surroundings conducive to study, for, in those days, Magdalene was a little oasis of idleness and insubordination to University rules and regulations. It was indeed more like a club than a college! For instance, no one ever dreamt of wearing a cap and gown, even at night-time, and Proctors' fees were therefore a serious item in my expenditure, although being a good runner, and in fair training, I generally managed to elude his "bulldogs." On one occasion, however, I ran at a terrific speed straight into the arms of the latter as they emerged from a side street to intercept me. This occurred one evening nearly opposite the "Bull" in Trumpington Street, and the result was a heavy fall and grievous injury to all concerned from contact with the kerbstone. I was stunned for a moment, and recovered to find the sardonic features of "Red M——"[1] bending over me.

"Mr. de Windt of Magdalene, of course!" he

[1] Old University men will recall the nickname given to a well-known Proctor of Jesus College.

murmured, recognizing a familiar delinquent. "You shall hear more of this in the morning."

I fully expected to be sent down for a term at least, but nothing ever came of it. Even the Proctors were long-suffering—in those days; or perhaps this one had long since given me up as incorrigible!

Notwithstanding these little contretemps, there was something very free and charming about University life, at any rate as we lived it in Magdalene, although I fear lectures took up an infinitesimal portion of my time. There was a dinner-party somewhere nearly every night, followed by music, whist, or gayer games of chance, at which, I am glad to say, I was more fortunate than on board the "Alpha"; then there were the Newmarket meetings only a few miles away, very fair hunting with the Cambridgeshire, and three days a week with the Drag. In summer there was the May Term with its dances, theatricals, and cheery supper-parties, with boxing and racquets throughout the year to keep one in condition. One Long Vacation I made a canoeing trip from Oxford to London, and, hoisting a sail, was upset by a sudden gust of wind, and washed, canoe and all, down a dangerous weir. Oddly enough, all my closest shaves from death have been by water, probably because I never learnt to swim. On this occasion, I was going down for the third (and last) time, when seized by the hair and dragged into safety by a friend in need—and another canoe.

At Cambridge I "kept" in rooms in the second court of my college, once occupied (in the seventeenth century) by no less a personage than the great Samuel Pepys. Even in those days Magdalene must have been a fairly convivial college, to judge by the following entry which appears in the "Register Book" for October 21, 1653, anent the famous Diarist: "Mem. That Peapys [*sic*] and Hind were solemnly admonished for having been scandalously over-served with drink ye night before." (Signed) John Wood, Registrar.

My sitting-room was beautifully panelled with old oak, and its latticed windows looked on to a court with a carefully tended grass plot in the centre. I recollect on one occasion some Americans came to see over the college, and may add, incidentally, that, at that time, the former were rarely met with in the best English society, and were therefore as modest and unassuming as they are now the reverse. Nor at that period did they think it necessary to revile everything "British," as the following colloquy, which I overheard between a fair damsel from Cincinatti and the porter who was showing her party round, will show:—

"Say, mister, why caynt we get grayss like that in Amurrica?" inquired the lady, pointing to the lawn, as smooth and level as a billiard-table.

"Well, you see, madam," replied the porter sympathetically but with unconscious satire, "that lawn was sowed some hundreds of years ago!"

I do not know whether the laws at Cambridge are as stringent as they were with regard to association with the fair sex, but in my time the direst penalties were visited upon any undergraduate for even conversing with a lady of inferior rank to himself in the street, while the latter, though she might be perfectly respectable, could be relegated by the Vice-Chancellor to a kind of prison called the "Spinning House," whence she emerged, disgraced for ever in the eyes of the community. But I fancy this outrageous state of affairs exists no longer; at any rate, I have often seen it severely and justly condemned in the London Press. I should add that the terrible threats of expulsion to male evil-doers in this respect never affected the genial undergraduates of Magdalene, where angels (from London) were often entertained unawares (so far as the Dons were concerned), not, of course, in college, but at the various hostelries around Cambridge. An old and unwieldy landau, located in an adjoining livery stable, and known as the "*Tête-à-tête* Fly," was always used to convey (with closely drawn blinds) our fair guests from the railway station to the house of entertainment selected for lunch or dinner. And, on one occasion, a Magdalene man arrived at one of these well-known inns in the dusk of a winter's evening, to find himself confronted by a black-gowned Proctor and his usual posse of "bulldogs." No wonder the delinquent turned livid with apprehension, and his poor little guest (a popular burlesque

actress) nearly fainted from fright; but she soon recovered and laughed as gaily as any one else, when some wild undergraduates who had dressed up for the occasion, revealed themselves and joined in the merry repast which concluded the evening.

The gentleman who conceived this practical joke hailed from Downing, a college then (and now, for all I know) even more lax than Magdalene, and one whose hospitable portals were ever open to receive students expelled from other colleges for over-exuberance of spirits. Every old Cantab will remember Jack Perkins the Dean—a hard-drinking, hard-riding sportsman, who, when he was Proctor, was said to pursue disorderly students on horseback in full hunting costume! My facetious friend from Downing was of a sporting turn of mind, and frequently entertained friends of similar tastes from London and elsewhere. And it came to pass that one of these, an amusing, pleasant-mannered individual of the name of Victor Scott,[1] nearly landed me not only in a very unpleasant predicament, but also in one of Her Majesty's gaols!

It happened this way. Some months after meeting Scott at Cambridge, I was hunting with friends in Warwickshire, and, one morning, when going up to town for the day, whom should I see but my Downing friend, Scott, emerging from a down train at Rugby station.

"The very man I want," said he, and proceeded

[1] The *surname* is fictitious.

to explain that he was then on his way to Darby's, the well-known horse-dealer's, to purchase a couple of light-weight hunters for a wealthy German baron, but that, being something over sixteen stone, he could not himself try the animals over fences, or put them through their paces. "Now, I know you're a judge of a horse," added Scott, "and I shall be quite content with your decision."

This tickled my vanity (as the wily rascal probably intended it should), and I at once agreed to postpone my journey to London, and actually drove this impostor to Darby's yard in the brougham which had conveyed me to the station—much to the disgust of my host when the fact was afterwards mentioned at the Warwick Assizes.

"I have bought two of those crocks," said Scott, as we sat down to lunch at the "George," after I had ridden perhaps a dozen horses with a view to his selection. "It's rather a stiff price (seven hundred guineas), but I think they are worth it."

What arrangement was made I know not, but Scott must have had satisfactory references, seeing that his cheque was cheerfully accepted, and both horses were boxed in the afternoon train which conveyed us to town. We wound up the day with dinner and a play, but Scott retired early, having to leave for the Continent early the following morning. The next time I saw him was in the dock.

For over a month I heard nothing more of the matter, when one day I read in the paper of Scott's

arrest at Brighton on a charge of obtaining goods under false pretences. It was also stated that he had stolen two valuable horses from Mr. Darby, of Rugby, and had sold them four days afterwards, in Rotterdam, for a quarter their value. Of course this news upset me considerably, and I went off post-haste to my solicitor, who looked rather glum when I entered into details.

"I don't see how they can drag you into it," he said at last, "but it's all very unpleasant"; with which remark I cordially concurred. At any rate, it was decided that I should attend the trial at Warwick (Baron Huddleston was the judge), and there I saw my late friend sent to five years' penal servitude. The sentence was a severe one, but the prisoner, it was stated, had been at the game for years. Fortunately my name was not mentioned throughout the proceedings, but the suspense which I endured during that trial taught me a salutary lesson, and I have ever since been very chary of agreeable strangers—however well born and plausible they may be.

While at Cambridge I spent a long vacation with the father of a college friend, Mr. John Lancaster of "Deerhound" fame,[1] on board his yacht the "White Rose." We went to Norway, viâ the Shetland Islands, and fell in, at Lerwick, with the

[1] During the action fought off Cherbourg in 1864 by the American frigates "Kearsage" and "Alabama," the "Deerhound" rescued Captain Semmes and several of the crew of the "Alabama" when the latter went down.

Duke and Duchess of St. Albans on their yacht the "Ceres." Both vessels were making for Bergen, and arranged to keep company, but the first night out a furious squall struck us, and eventually settled into a stiff nor'-wester, which raised such a heavy sea that (my hostess being a bad sailor) we put back into Lerwick. The "Ceres," however, proceeded to Bergen, where the Duke and his party, seeing nothing of us for two or three days, naturally concluded we had come to grief. There was no cable to the Shetlands in those days, and in London the "White Rose" was therefore reported as lost. But the error was soon rectified by her appearance off the Norwegian coast, when our safety was at once telegraphed to England.

I had a delightful time that summer, dodging about the Norwegian fjords, and I also enjoyed some good sport with the Duke, who was an enthusiastic fisherman and one of the most charming men I ever met. Finally, we left the "White Rose" at Trondhjem, drove in *karioles* to the head of the Baltic, and met the yacht again at Sundsvall, and so home viâ Stockholm and Copenhagen—a most enjoyable trip which finally ended at Dover. Here we found the town *en fête*, for Captain Webb had just returned from Calais, having accomplished his remarkable swim across the Channel on the preceding night. We strolled up to the club, where I was introduced to the hero of the hour, a cheery-faced, unassuming fellow, who looked supremely

uncomfortable at suddenly finding himself the centre of attraction, and common talk of Europe. It was a very sultry day in August, and I wondered why Webb wore a heavy silk muffler, until he removed it for a moment to show a bystander where the junction of the sun and salt water had traced a deep and gaping sore along the back of his neck. Poor Fred Webb! I got to know him pretty well after that, and was sincerely sorry to hear, some years later, of his tragic end in the "Whirlpool" rapid at Niagara.

A few months after this I left Cambridge, having, I regret to say, done very little credit to my college from an industrious point of view—in fact, I did not even pass my Little-Go! However, I should again remind the reader that Magdalene was essentially a riding (and not a reading) college, and that in this deficiency I was by no means singular!

The immediate cause of my departure from the University was the death of my brother, in London, from an attack of typhoid fever contracted at Versailles. This occurred only six months before I came of age, and I had therefore no difficulty in obtaining leave from the Court of Chancery to travel during that period. The Near East was then in a state of ferment, owing to the rebellion in the Balkan provinces, and to that portion of Europe I therefore turned my steps, having (in those days as now) a strong objection to the beaten track of the tourist. This was in the autumn of 1876.

VI

SOME YOUTHFUL SCRAPES AND ADVENTURES

My friend the late George L——, of Magdalene, who was also leaving college, accompanied me to the Near East; and we afterwards made several journeys together. "Ikey," as he was known to his intimates, was a character: pale, fair-haired, well below the middle height, and possessed of as quaint a personality and keen a sense of humour as I have ever met with. L—— had not perhaps an imposing presence, but woe betide the luckless stranger who, encouraged by this fact, attempted to take a rise out of my friend; for the latter's repartee was so prompt and deadly, that the aggressor generally retired, severely worsted, from the contest. Ikey resembled a practised advocate in that he never lost his temper, and had a natural gift of saying the cruellest things with a smiling and amiable countenance. I recollect, on one occasion, a young English diplomat of irreproachable exterior, somewhat marred by an eruptive complexion, came to lunch on board a yacht on which we were guests. My friend had only recently met this youth, who (in facetious allusion to the former's stature) hailed him

as "Mr. Shrimplet" as he stepped on board, much to the amusement of some ladies standing by. But Ikey never moved a muscle. "Good-morning, Mr. Pimplet," he promptly replied in the quiet, cheerful tone of an ordinary greeting, but to the intense disgust of the crestfallen attaché, who relapsed into silence, while the imperturbable Ikey strolled slowly away, having, as usual, scored heavily against his adversary.

Buda-Pesth was our objective point, and thence down the Danube to Orsova, where we were to stay for a while with an English friend who was trying to run a coal mine in the "Banát." The journey began badly, for at Calais our luggage was registered to Vienne in France instead of the Austrian capital, in which we were detained for several days awaiting its arrival.

This was my first acquaintance with Vienna, and although I have been there many times since (and at all seasons of the year), I have always found it a most depressing city. And yet there seems to be a prevalent idea in England (amongst those who have never been there) that Vienna is one of the gayest places in Europe. St. Petersburg is a similar fraud, but in this case the delusion is probably due to cheap English fiction, issued by authors who have never even seen the melancholy city on the Neva.

Only a short time ago I was much amused, at a dinner-party in London, to hear an Englishman

relating his Viennese experiences. "You must go to Vienna to see life," he declared. "The only place in the world where you can enjoy yourself without the interference of the police—no early closing, absolute freedom in all things—and such delightful society. But of course you must have the very best introductions," and so on.

Now I had seen this gentleman in Vienna, and (although he was not aware of it) we had stayed at the same hotel, and in the height of the season. Indeed, I saw him almost daily, but he was always alone; generally in the reading-room, yawning over a *Times* five days old. After a solitary dinner in the restaurant, he would retire to the smoking-room with a Tauchnitz novel, and at ten o'clock precisely go to bed! When, and where, my friend basked in court circles, or revelled in fierce dissipation, is therefore a mystery, but I can safely say that, while in Vienna, I only once saw him smile, and that was when he was driving away to the railway station—*en route* for England!

We left Vienna for Bukarest on a bleak November day under a wintry sky with flying snowflakes. The cold was severe, and we were not sorry to enter a snug compartment (there were few *trains de luxe* in those days) which was already occupied by three passengers of unmistakable nationality. An elderly, rather pompous Englishman, with—as we imagined—a good-looking wife and still prettier daughter. Papa, apparently a gentleman of com-

mercial importance, was inclined to be sociable, and informed us that he was travelling for pleasure. The ladies were charming, especially the daughter, whose conversation, unlike that of her parents, did not betray the occasional lapse of an aitch. By the time Pesth was reached, we were on the best of terms, especially with our fair friends, and were therefore delighted to find that we were all bound for the same hotel. The latter was only reached at midnight, and supper for five, (with champagne), was therefore ordered by Ikey, and served in the restaurant. And so hilarious was the meal that, simultaneously with the coffee and liqueurs, there appeared a gold-laced porter to remind us that the hour was late, or rather very early. So we bade our friends farewell, as they were apparently leaving early the next day. But they vowed to renew our acquaintance on the earliest opportunity in England. "Good luck to you, my boy," said the now genial Mr. Wickham, amicably patting me on the shoulder; "I fear the ladies will miss you both terribly!"

Early the next morning I was smoking a cigar in the courtyard of the hotel, when, much to my surprise, I met my cousin, Sir Audley G——, of the Diplomatic Service. "Hullo!" I exclaimed; "I thought you were in Madrid."

"So I was until a month ago," was the reply. "But I have just been appointed Consul-General of Hungary. We are all staying at the 'Hungaria'

pro tem. Come and dine to-night, you and your friend—seven o'clock sharp."

We turned up at the appointed hour, and dined in the G——s' private sitting-room. But judge of my surprise and confusion, when, on sitting down to dinner, a strangely familiar voice inquired whether I would take "thick or clear soup," and I looked up to find that the speaker was no other than our boon companion of the previous night! "Mr. Wickham," in short, was my cousin's butler! It afterwards transpired that the "ladies" were maids to various members of the family, and that the relationship between the three existed only in our own imagination. But from that day to this I have never told my cousin, knowing that he keenly appreciates a joke, and that I should never have heard the last of this one! Perhaps, as it is, I never shall!

Buda-Pesth was a queer place in those days, and was (with the exception, perhaps, of Bukarest) the most immoral city in the world, or at any rate in Europe. Even at the "Hôtel Hungaria," where our adventure occurred (a most exclusive establishment), male guests were formerly provided by the hotel porter with a photograph book, from which they could select a fair, but frail, companion to enliven, for a monetary consideration, their evening repast, and this was once the practice in hotels of every class throughout Hungary, and adjacent countries. But this sort of thing is no longer tolerated, at

any rate in the Austrian Empire; and, except to the vicious and initiated, Buda-Pesth is now as staid and respectable as Vienna itself.

The "Orient Express" now runs without a change of cars from Paris to Constantinople, but in the seventies we had to travel by steamer down the Danube River to our destination, Orsova—now an important station on the main line of railway. We had a miserable journey of about four days, in a small, comfortless boat, crowded with so-called Russian patriots on their way to help their Servian brethren to repel the Turk, though I fancy the Servians would gladly have dispensed with their services. Some were cavalry officers, and others wild-eyed Cossacks, armed to the teeth, but many were civilians who had never handled a rifle, and who, being merely "on the make," had no intention of doing so. These rowdy blackguards turned the steamer into such a pandemonium that decent passengers were driven out of the saloon to the snowy, wind-swept decks, while the "volunteers" from Holy Russia drank and wrangled over their cards and vodka in the warmth inside. The cold was intense, and fortunately we had stout sheepskins to keep it out, for the thermometer nearly touched zero. There was plenty to eat and drink, but it was all very cheerless and uncomfortable, and we were glad enough to arrive at our destination.

Orsova was at that time a miserable place, with

only one squalid inn, a hovel chiefly patronized by the crews of the river boats. But ponies and a Wallach guide were awaiting us on the landing-stage, and we set out forthwith, riding some twenty miles through dense forests and an occasional snow-drift to the mines. Here we stayed for nearly a month in about as wild a country as I have ever struck in Europe, but we had a pleasant time—comfortable quarters, plenty of rough shooting, horses to ride, and so forth. But one day I was greatly shocked to read, in an English newspaper, that my friend Billy Hoole of Magdalene had been killed while riding a steeplechase at St. Ives; and, by a strange coincidence, the owner of the animal he had ridden bore the sinister surname of "Death." This sad news cast such a gloom over L—— and myself that we decided to try a change of scene, and therefore set out at once for Orsova to resume our journey to Constantinople, which journey, by the way, was nearly frustrated by the following incident.

On arrival at Orsova we found that no steamer was available until the next day, but the mining agent, a worthy German, entertained us, and we were therefore spared a night at the dirty and comfortless "White Ship." But it so happened that it was Christmas Eve, and a "masked ball" was to be given at the aforesaid hostelry to celebrate the occasion. This entertainment may be pictured when I say that the guests consisted of the most disreputable

characters in the town—male and female—who each paid twenty-five kreuzers for the privilege of drinking and gambling in a barn-like structure, reeking with spirits and tobacco, and dimly lit by kerosene lamps. There was music—and good music—provided by wandering gipsies or "Tziganes" (who far excelled many of the so-called "Hungarians" from Hamburg we hear in London), but there was no dancing and no masks, inside the building, although they were eventually used (for business purposes), outside in the street!

Our host had partaken freely of the generous wines of Hungary, or he would certainly never have suggested an adjournment to such a place after dark. However, the Herr, being full of wine and enterprise, would take no denial, and about eleven o'clock we sallied forth along the frozen, slippery streets, the party consisting of our three selves and Smith, an English clerk in the office. When we reached the inn nothing would dissuade our host from standing refreshment to some elderly houris, who evinced less interest in our society, than the contents of his well-lined pocket-book. And about this period a smiling, beetle-browed ruffian, in shabby tweeds and an astrakhan cap, who had formed part of the group, suddenly disappeared. This was probably the pilot-fish that, an hour or so later, brought the sharks about us.

When we left the "White Ship" many lamps had flickered out in the streets, and the latter were in

almost total darkness. We walked in the middle of the road, keeping a sharp look out, but when it came the attack was so sudden that we were taken completely unawares. Only the German carried a revolver, which he was too drunk to use, while to shout for the police would have been useless, for they were all "Christmasing" at home. These thoughts flashed through my mind as I felt my throat violently encircled from behind, while poor L——, struck with a stick on the back of the head, lurched heavily forward and fell on his face in the snow. Smith luckily dodged his man, and, keeping on his feet, was able to deliver a smashing blow full in the eyes of my assailant, who reeled back, releasing me. Then began a general *mêlée* by the light of an oil street-lamp, and we three Englishmen put in some good work, though our foes were only dimly distinguishable by the crape masks they wore. Four scoundrels had attacked us, but two were quickly felled to the ground, where they lay senseless, and the others then decamped, not before they had stabbed Smith in the ribs as a souvenir. As for the Herr, he was too much overcome by his potations to take any part in the conflict, although he had been the cause of all our trouble. However, I am glad to say that the two malefactors we secured lay in hospital for some weeks, and then received a long term of imprisonment; also that Smith eventually recovered, although, for a time, his life was despaired of.

The next day we started for Constantinople, and as an armistice had just been signed between Turkey and Servia, did not remain long at Belgrade —now a beautiful city, then a dirty, poverty-stricken place. Melton Prior, of the *Illustrated London News*, joined the steamer here, and we travelled with him to Constantinople, where he was bound on journalistic work connected with the International Congress. Baron Hirsch's railway was then in course of construction, so we had to cross the Black Sea from Varna to Constantinople, an unpleasant passage at all times in those days, owing to the discomfort on board the Austrian liners. We arrived at Constantinople to find a lull in the storm of Balkan politics; nothing was doing, for the Russo-Turkish War only broke out some time after. So we travelled leisurely home in a French tramp steamer, touching at perhaps a dozen Levantine and Italian ports before we reached Marseilles. We were the only passengers on board the grimy little craft, and partook of our meals with the captain, mate, and engineer. The trip was uneventful, but during the two months it occupied, I was able to realize the versatility of the French so far as cookery is concerned. For I witnessed the arrival on board of an aged and attenuated cow at the Piræus, which, for an entire week, formed part of our daily "menu," and was never served twice under the same name. And I can safely assert that there is not a beast of the field, or bird of the air which that animal did not

represent, at some period or other of its *post-mortem* career. We discussed it at the midday *déjeuner* as "Canneton à la Rouennaise," and met it again at dinner under the guise of "Suprême de Chevreuil," and these variations occurred every day, though the dish, whatever it was, was always palatable, and, at any rate, something like the real thing. One day I sought out the "chef" in his three-foot kitchen, and congratulated him upon the marvellous results he had contrived to attain with such meagre materials.

"Mais oui, Monsieur," he admitted. "C'est toujours la même bête! Mais, que voulez-vous? Le 'Commandant' est vrai 'boulevardier,' et il faut toujours changer un peu ses idées!"

VII

LIVELY LONDON IN THE SEVENTIES—MY FIRST STEEPLECHASE

In the spring of 1877 I came of age and into independent means, which latter, at that period, did not seem likely to be increased by my own exertions. A competence is sometimes a curse to a young man starting in life, but I never found it so, for it enabled me to carry out certain minor projects of travel which eventually led to important journeys of exploration; while the latter, in their turn, enabled me to add considerably to my income by literary and journalistic work. But I am anticipating, for the serious business of my life did not commence for at least ten years after I was released from the apron-strings of the Court of Chancery. A few wild oats had to be sown first!

For some months I stayed with Raja Brooke and my sister, (who were then in England) at their place in Wiltshire, and remained there till they returned to Saráwak. A frequent guest of theirs was Admiral Sir Harry Keppel, who had been an intimate friend of Sir James Brooke, and whose counsel and assistance, when cruising off Borneo in the "Dido," had more than once proved invaluable to the first Raja. My brother-in-law had served under the Admiral as midshipman, and told me an anecdote which happened

in Malta, and which is typical of his old chief's absolute indifference to personal danger.

Keppel—then a lieutenant—was driving a crowded coach to a picnic in the interior of the island, and the team he was handling was none too steady. Nevertheless, a young artillery officer who occupied the box-seat, and who posed as a wit, kept annoying the coachman by tilting his hat over his eyes, seizing hold of the reins, and otherwise behaving like a buffoon, for the benefit of his brother officers. Presently they reached the summit of a long, steep hill, and Keppel, who was rapidly losing his temper, quietly begged the facetious gunner to desist, or he could not answer for the consequences. But the request was unheeded, and suddenly, without warning, the sailor switched off the drag, threw the reins over the horses' heads, and away the team went, dashing downhill at a speed that threatened imminent destruction. "If you want to get killed—I'm your man," smilingly observed Keppel, and, a few seconds later, the coach was overturned with a terrific crash. Fortunately no one was fatally injured, though some of the party were seriously hurt, and of course there were no ladies on board, or "the little Admiral" (who was a devoted admirer of the fair sex) would certainly not have resorted to such extreme measures. I don't suppose there ever lived such a dare-devil, on land or sea, as Sir Harry Keppel, and yet he was the quietest, mildest-mannered little man I ever met.

When the Raja and my sister left England I

took up my quarters in London, in rooms in Clifford Street. My only club in those days was the "Raleigh," then a favourite haunt of the *jeunesse dorée*, a large contingent of which was recruited from the Guards and Cavalry regiments. I am told that the "Raleigh," (of which I have ceased to be a member for many years) is now a sedate and austere establishment; if so, it must greatly have changed since the days when its doors frequently remained open throughout the twenty-four hours, and the members occasionally indulged in such playful pastimes as imprisoning a waiter in the refrigerator! This artless pleasantry, by the way, nearly had an awkward termination, for the wretched man was forgotten, and only released just in time from his Arctic surroundings. But the victim averred that he would cheerfully have undergone another incarceration, for the large sum which he received as compensation for his unpleasant experience. It is not so very long ago since this occurred, but I doubt if one of the subscribers to that fund is now in the land of the living:

"Where are they now, I wonder,
With whom those days were passed;
The pace was a little too good, I fear,
For some of them to last."

I believe Adam Lindsay Gordon wrote those lines, and they sum up the situation when I think of the reckless but delightful companions of those days. Fred Russell, the best friend I ever had; Hughie Drummond (the Joe Miller of the Stock Exchange);

the popular Irishman, George Goddard, who lived by his wits and like a millionaire; Dudley Ward; "Treasure" Dalbiac of the R.H.A. and Denny Cropper (both killed in the late Boer War); Ned de Clifford; "Ballyhooley" Martin, Freddy Wombwell, Harry Milbanke, "Shaver" Lee Barber, and Jimmy Jameson, the African explorer: I could fill a chapter with the names of good fellows, most of whom have now, alas! long since joined the majority. Russell was a subaltern in the 5th Lancers, then quartered at Ipswich, which fact did not deter my friend from running up to town every afternoon, and returning by a newspaper train in time for parade on the following morning. It was Fred's favourite boast that, for four months, he never once slept in a bed! Ole Brer Rabbit, as he was called (chiefly because he frequently "lay low" from his creditors) was certainly one of the most witty and amusing men I have ever known. A giant in stature, Russell was also the largest-hearted soul in existence, and his good nature was often abused, for he could never say No—especially to impecunious acquaintances on the "touch," with whom he was always glad to share an already attenuated purse. But "Brabbit" had not the remotest idea of the value of money, and I have known him begin the day with a hundred-pound note and be absolutely *decavé* the same evening, without, moreover, being able to account for his poverty! Russell's career in the 5th was somewhat short-lived (owing, perhaps, to financial reasons), and he eventu-

ally took to journalism, being on the staff of the *Sporting Times* and other papers for the few remaining years of his life. For, although an excellent soldier, he chafed at military routine and discipline, lax as they were in those days. My friend's knowledge of tactics was also rather limited, to judge from his reply to an examiner at Aldershot. "Why is Cavalry employed on a 'Reconnaissance,' Mr. Russell?" inquired a portly Infantry Colonel on the Board.

"Well, sir," said Fred, regarding his questioner critically up and down, "I suppose it's to give a sort of *tone* to the proceedings!" Needless to say, this settled him!

Another "leader of levity" in those salad days was Reginald Corbett, who once enacted a corpse in Canada—and who, owing to this fact and his talents in the "Christy Minstrel" line, was (and is) known to his intimates as "Bones." The latter was travelling with his father, and, while on their way from Toronto to stay with friends in Virginia, a telegram arrived at the former place for Mr. Corbett, senior, announcing the death of his brother. It was worded: "*R. died today*"—(the initial standing for Bones' deceased uncle Robert), and was immediately wired on from Toronto to Virginia, where it was opened by the expectant hosts, long before the arrival of their guests. His son Reginald not being invited, Mr. Corbett (being still unaware of his bereavement) dispatched another telegram from Baltimore: "Am bringing R. down to-morrow." But the recipients, comparing both

telegrams, came to a sad and not unreasonable conclusion, and, on arrival at their destination, Mr. Corbett and "Bones," much to their dismay, were greeted by a party of sorrowful friends in deep mourning—and a hearse!

It may be that I am growing old, but I can't help thinking that the young man of the present day takes his pleasure more sadly than we used to do! Most of the former seem to derive more pleasure from a study of their digestive organs than the contemplation of a pretty face, and neither manhood nor manners have been improved by the idiotic worship of wealth, which now seems to pervade even the upper classes in England. Also there seems to be less *bonne camaraderie* amongst the Golden Youth of to-day than there was in the early eighties. I wonder, for instance, how the solemn-faced, hot-water-sipping, conventional young gentleman of 1909, would regard the perpetration of the following practical joke upon his sacred and pampered person. Sir Claude de Crespigny alludes to it in his amusing memoirs,[1] but this genial sportsman has evidently been misinformed, when he writes that the chief actors were three officers in the 4th Hussars. As a matter of fact, Wilson T—— (of the latter regiment) and myself were the sole perpetrators of the scheme, which ended, (for ourselves) in such a lamentable "fiasco."

[1] *Sporting Memoirs of Sir Claude de Crespigny.* Lawrence and Bullen, 1897.

This is what happened. A mutual friend of ours residing in the west of England was entertaining a party of friends for the annual county ball, and one evening, while dining at the Naval and Military Club, it occurred to Wilson T—— and myself that it would be rather fun to pay him a surprise visit in disguise. Our friend wished to dispose of his estate, and we, therefore, decided to appear as house-agents; —Wilson T—— as a principal partner and the writer as his clerk. A man from Clarkson's accompanied us the next morning, and having reached the country town adjoining our friend's place, made us up at the inn; Wilson T——, a slim young subaltern, as a portly, elderly business man, with grey hair and whiskers, while I was adorned with a bald head, black beard, and spectacles—both such artistic disguises that they would have puzzled Scotland Yard.

Now, had it not been for a snake in the grass—in the shape of a third diner at the Club—who had carefully made mental notes of our plans, all would have gone well. But this dastardly traitor was not going to be deprived of a joke on his own account, which, I must admit, was a more sensational one than our own. Had Wilson T—— and I been aware of the nature of a telegram dispatched by this Judas to the west-country squire early the following morning, previously to our departure, we should scarcely have left London so well pleased with ourselves. For the missive ran thus: "Two men

disguised as house-agents will call upon you this afternoon. Be on your guard. They are burglars."

The excitement caused by this anonymous message may be imagined, especially as the house-party included some wild young Guardsmen, all eager for the fray and a chance of giving the wretched thieves a warm reception. The chief constable of the county had also been notified, so that we were received in the entrance-hall not only by detectives, but also by a number of policemen, who had been secreted in various parts of the house. When, after we had been securely handcuffed, the host himself came to look at the captured "cracksmen," there was nothing to do but throw up the sponge, and reveal our identity, which, our disguises being so perfect, was no easy matter. Sir Claude de Crespigny relates that we were "kept in durance vile for several hours," but this was fortunately not the case—our only punishment being the chaff and ridicule which we had to endure that evening at dinner. The miscreant who brought about this *dénouement* was one Tony S—— (afterwards my partner in a small racing stud), and I verily believe his span of life would have been shortened, had Wilson T—— and I come across him within twenty-four hours of the catastrophe!

About this period I was the victim of a mistake which nearly cost me my life, although, as the humour was unintentional, it could hardly be called a "practical" joke. A party of us were staying with a friend at Pope's Villa, near Twickenham, which our

host had rented for the summer months. Hughie Drummond had been a recent guest, and being an excellent swimmer, was in the habit of plunging into the river every morning from the bottom of the garden, where a boat-house contained the usual riverside flotilla: a launch, a couple of rowing-boats, and an outrigger—one of those crank, spidery contrivances which, to a novice, are as hard to sit as an unbroken two-year-old. One fine, but sultry, morning I rose about six o'clock, and while strolling on the lawn, caught sight of this aquatic conveyance, which had been left afloat in the boat-house on the previous evening. There was no one about, (my fellow-guests were not early risers), and the only visible human object was an old gentleman, in flannels and a huge panama, complacently fishing from a punt a few yards down stream. The river looked cool and inviting, and, being unaware of the perilous nature of the proceeding, I took a pair of sculls which were placed against the wall beside the outrigger, got into the latter, and with some difficulty pushed off from land.

I have already mentioned that I cannot swim; and on this occasion I clearly realized, before many seconds had elapsed, that without speedy assistance I must inevitably drown. While these thoughts rushed into my brain the current was carrying me slowly but surely away, and as, with a last despairing effort, I strove to pull a stroke shorewards, the outrigger quietly turned over, and (for the second time)

I sank into the cold and clinging embrace of Father Thames. Then as, after the first immersion, I rose to the surface, gasping and spluttering, I beheld my sole hope of salvation—the old man in the punt—"Help! help!" I yelled, as I was carried well within arm's length of the stolid fisherman. "For God's sake, sir, help!" and I can still vividly recall my agonized sensations when I saw this inhuman old wretch remain motionless, with one eye on his infernal float, while with a twinkle in the other he seemed to be watching my dying struggles. The monster even shook his head and laughed outright as I was drawn deeper and deeper into the swirling waters, from which, however, by the blessing of Providence, I was now delivered for the second time. For suddenly my feet touched ground, the current having carried me on to a gravel bed, of which (luckily for me) there are plenty in this part of the river.

Of course my host was furious, and when I was safely tucked into bed, sallied forth to give the disciple of Walton (still placidly angling) a piece of his mind. But the worthy old gentleman was overcome with surprise and concern when told of my narrow escape. "I am really more distressed than I can say," he explained. "But that other gentleman staying with you came by me early yesterday morning, with loud cries for 'Help,' and when I went to his assistance, suddenly turned head over heels in the water, made a rude gesture with his hand and nose,

and swam away roaring with laughter. So I naturally thought this one was playing the same game!" Of course, Hughie was the culprit.

An idle existence in London is, in some ways, very attractive but apt to become enervating, especially when you seldom seek your couch until the small hours. The Gaiety Theatre was then becoming the fashion, and it was considered "the thing" to take a stall there by the month, or even longer. I never did this myself, and could never understand how people can go night after night to the same performance, with even the immortal Nelly Farren in the principal rôle. On the other hand, *Little Doctor Faust* and *Robbing Roy* were burlesques which I have sat out at least a score of times without a trace of boredom, which would certainly be difficult in the case of a modern American play or "musical comedy." Nelly Farren was one of the best friends I ever had, and used to give me motherly advice which was, I fear, sadly needed in those days! Her genius and versatility had made her the idol of the London public, and yet, off the stage, she was as naive and simple-minded as a child. I recollect once visiting her at a pretty little cottage she had taken near London, where her great ambition was to rear poultry. Some of the best-bred Dorkings were therefore duly procured, and, the morning after their installation, our hostess came running into the breakfast-room with an egg in her hand. "Look," she cried excitedly, "the first one from my own poultry

yard." And it was difficult to persuade the enthusiastic poultry fancier that the egg was but a "nest" one, made of china! Nell was the recipient of priceless gifts, many of them from Royalty, during her long and brilliant career; but her most treasured possessions were valueless souvenirs from the occupants of pit and gallery, whom she used to call "my boys," and who worshipped the very stage she trod upon.

After the play I frequently strolled into the card-room at the "Raleigh" to look on, for in those days the stakes were very high, but I never played myself, whist being a form of gambling that never appealed to me. On the other hand, I attended most race meetings within reach of London, not for betting purposes, but from sheer love of sport and horse-flesh. My great aim in life was to ride a race, but this seemed an unattainable ambition until the winter of 1878, when I happened to be staying with friends in North Wales. A meeting was to be held at a neighbouring town—Welshpool—and as an open hunters' steeplechase was to close overnight, and two or three members of the house party had entered horses, I determined, by hook or by crook, to run one myself, more with the object of a ride, than any hope of success. There was no time to be lost, and my choice fell on a venerable, but still speedy, mare belonging to a young farmer near Cambridge. A wire was accordingly dispatched, and brought the animal, (bearing the appropriate name of "Folly"),

for the use of which I was to pay £10 and all expenses. And I shall never forget my delight on first donning colours and racing-breeches, though both were hurriedly and abominably made, by a Welsh artist. "Folly" was a half-bred, ragged-looking mare, and looked such a scarecrow in the paddock alongside smooth-skinned, long-tailed thoroughbreds that she started at the useful odds of 20 to 1 in a field of eight! But my mount was in training (having lately run in a point-to-point race) and a safe jumper. As often happens at these country meetings, a local horse, ridden by a man in trousers and shirt-sleeves, won, beating all the cracks from the training stables. We actually managed to struggle into third place, though I believe the old mare was as much surprised as her rider. And one of the jockeys in the aforesaid steeplechase was a young subaltern in the Scots Greys, whose brilliant military career has since made his name a familiar one to the British public—General Harry Scobell. This, I may add, was an inaugurative meeting at Welshpool, which has now become an important fixture.

One of our house party on that occasion was poor Walter Powell, then Conservative member for Malmesbury, who met with a terrible death in a balloon disaster shortly afterwards. Colonel Templer and Mr. Arthur Agg-Gardner accompanied him, but dropped out of the balloon before it was swept out to sea, near Bridport, one winter's evening,

and never seen again. I went down to Bridport to see Agg-Gardner in hospital (he had sustained severe injuries), and a coastguardsman then assured me that he had seen the balloon fall into the sea, not far from the coast. Be that as it may, no traces of poor Powell or the balloon have been discovered from that day to this. In view of subsequent events, it seems strange to recall words spoken by the unfortunate aeronaut only a short time before his death. He had invited me to make an ascent with him, adding, "Why, my dear Harry, it is not half so dangerous as race-riding!" By the way, for some time after the sad event, every other man one met in London averred that he had been asked to make the trip, and had therefore had a narrow escape! If all of them spoke the truth, it would have needed not one, but at least a dozen balloons, to carry the party!

It is no longer the fashion to eat whitebait at Greenwich, but, at the time I write of, the "Ship" and "Trafalgar" were generally crowded on fine Sunday evenings, and nothing was pleasanter than to sit out in the little garden of the former, in the cool of the evening, throwing coppers to mudlarks and watching the sun set over the darkening river and Isle of Dogs. I recollect driving down once, with a few congenial spirits, just before the "Princess Alice" disaster, which for an obvious reason terminated, for a while, our riverside repasts. Amongst our number were Fred Russell and Jimmy

J—— the explorer, and during dinner the conversation turned upon running, Fred very rashly offering to wager a pony that I would beat anybody sitting at the table over any distance of ground. Now it so happened that J—— was very useful at a mile and over, and he promptly took up the challenge. The course selected was a strange one —from Piccadilly Circus to Albert Gate—and the race took place immediately we reached the Raleigh Club, which was shortly after one a.m., when, being a Sunday, the streets were comparatively deserted. Hughie Drummond acted as starter, and Cropper (who previously drove to the winning-post in a four-wheeler) as judge, while Fred Russell constituted himself clerk of the course, and cleared the track of several ladies of foreign nationality, who were viewing the proceedings with keen interest. It was a very even thing as far as Down Street, but here the hill told on me, and J—— gradually forged ahead. I should certainly have lost, had my opponent not tripped up on the edge of the pavement, and fallen heavily at the crossing into Hamilton Place, which gave me the race. My friend's fall resulted in a badly sprained ankle, which laid him up for several days; and anent this a curious thing happened. A lady, and near relative of his, then staying at Boulogne, dreamt, on the night of the occurrence, that he had met with an accident, the dream being so vivid that she wired to London the first thing in the morning to inquire

what had happened. This, of course, may have been mere coincidence, but if so, it was a curious one.

That, by the way, was the last occasion upon which I ever saw poor J——, who afterwards died with Stanley's expedition while crossing Africa to the relief of Emin Pasha.


ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE

VIII

A LITTLE RACING—AND SOME ROGUERY

My first public appearance in the saddle at Welshpool was followed by another, the following autumn, when I rode for a friend at a little meeting in Cheshire, and was nearly killed for my pains. There was a big field, and the course being a cramped one, with a dangerous turn, I was jostled at the latter, and nearly came a nasty cropper, thanks to the kind attentions of two "gentlemen" riding against me. Of course, being an illegal[1] meeting, there was no redress, and, as the stakes were small, this did not much matter. But I resolved that the same thing should not happen again, and therefore took up my quarters with a well-known trainer in Sussex, to ride a few gallops, and acquire some experience before performing again in the pigskin. I also went into training to a certain extent, drank wine sparingly, and kept early hours, with the result that, in a couple of months, both my riding and nerves had vastly improved. A man must live like an anchorite to succeed as a jockey, which is perhaps why so few gentlemen riders attain the fame of, say, Mr. Arthur Coventry, who sacrificed everything to the business,

[1] Not under Newmarket or Grand National hunt rules.

and to whom, in those days, few professionals could afford to give away an ounce of weight.

I must frankly own that, although full of zeal, I was never sufficiently good, either on the flat or over a country, to induce owners of horses to give me a mount except on rare occasions, and this was unlucky, for I have never scaled over ten stone. However, I got some riding of my own, for one day at Croydon I bought a horse out of a selling race, and this proved the nucleus of a small stud which I and Tony S—— (the author of the burglar fiasco) invested in. We took a small place near London, where we trained ourselves, and, for amateurs at the game, did not do much harm during the few months that the partnership lasted. Our Croydon purchase was a four-year-old filly by "Ely"—"Queensland," and on her I had my first winning mount in a hunters' flat race at Llandrindod Wells. But in the excitement of the moment I weighed in with my whip, and was therefore promptly disqualified by the late Colonel Otway, (of the Grenadier Guards), whose "Lord of the Mines" ran second.

Soon after this two additions were made to our stud in the shape of "Holstein" and a mare called "Mountain Deer," with whom I won a race in Belgium, but ran several times in England without success. We bought "Holstein" cheap at Bromley Steeplechases, and I forget how he was bred, but ten days later we won two races with him at the Worcester Meeting, with Arthur Coventry up, and

got back his purchase money and a bit over. He was an extraordinary-looking animal, as long as a Thames barge, with a head like a fiddle-case, and a habit of loudly grinding his teeth even during a race. But he had grey hairs in his tail, and I never saw a bad horse with this adornment. "Holstein" broke down badly shortly after Worcester, and we sold him to a cab proprietor at Brighton, who drove him out on Sundays in the family "chay," and proudly informed his friends that "Old Steyne" (as he called him) was a winner of races! A year or two later, I was driving in a cab from Brighton Station to the Norfolk Hotel, and hearing a familiar sound of grinding teeth, I looked out and saw my old friend in the shafts—a position he occupied for a long time after. "Agnes Peel," by "General Peel," was another one we had, and she would have done well for a bathing-machine; also a useful three-year-old by "Bras de Fer," but he broke his leg at exercise, and had to be destroyed.

Amongst those I used often to meet racing at this time was poor Garrett Moore, and later in life we became fast friends, though, when I first knew him, nothing pleased "Garry" more than to take a rise out of the gentleman rider in embryo. A short time after he had won the Grand National on "The Liberator," I met him at a dinner-party in London, and after dinner he told us of a brute he had ridden that day at Sandown Park, which, as they neared the water jump, kept "slowin' and

slowin'" as though about to refuse. "And what did you do then, Mr. Moore?" I asked, with all the respectful eagerness of a youthful tyro. "What did I do then?" slowly replied Garry, with an ominous twinkle in his eye. "What did I do then? Why I took my feet out of the irons, and climbed to the top of his neck. 'Now, you divil,' says I, 'you can fall if you like! I'll be the light end of ye anyhow!'"

Garry was an intimate friend of Fred Russell's, and on one occasion, at an Irish meeting, the latter was strolling on the course some distance away from the paddock, when he saw Moore, stealthily leading the horse he was about to ride towards a refreshment booth. Here Garry filled a soda-water bottle with whisky, and administered its contents to his mount, upon which Russell ran hastily back to the ring, and heavily backed the latter, which won at a very long price. On being asked what had made him select such a rank outsider, Brabbit described the mysterious proceeding he had witnessed, adding, "I knew Garry would not waste a pint of good whisky on one that wasn't trying!"

From first to last, S—— and I were certainly not lucky, so far as horses were concerned, and, when it ended, our partnership showed a small balance on the wrong side. In those days, however, pony and galloway racing were far more profitable than they are now, and some good stakes were to be picked up nearly every day during the summer season. So

I resolved to start "on my own," and see what I could do at the illegitimate game. For these meetings were under neither Newmarket, nor Grand National hunt, rules,[1] but were generally controlled by the licensed victuallers who ran them. The stakes, however, were always punctually paid, for the consumption of alcoholic refreshment on these occasions generally left a handsome balance to be divided amongst the promoters of the meeting, while there were generally two or three solvent bookmakers amongst the crowd of welshers composing the "ring." So far as I could discover, no one of my own social position had ever ventured to compete with the owners engaged in this class of sport, mostly publicans and sinners, who could nobble a pony or steal a watch with equal facility. In one respect, therefore, pony racing was a beneficial pastime, for it taught me to keep my eyes open, an accomplishment which I have often found useful in later years. And it is satisfactory to add that, although, during my association with this class of sport, I naturally ran strictly on the square, I was able to retire, at the end of a year or so, with a considerable balance to my credit.

Although at the conclusion of my pony-racing venture I possessed the smartest galloway in England, and had pretty well swept the board, I had to buy experience rather dearly before realizing that

[1] They are now controlled by the British Pony and Galloway Racing Association.

animals described as "ponies" were, in reality, miniature racehorses, some of which had run successfully under Newmarket rules, but had had their shoes pared, and been otherwise "faked" to pass under, considering their height, an incredibly low standard. The best galloway (or pony) I ever owned was a mare called "Umbrella,"[1] whom I saw win perhaps twenty times, and under half as many names, before she became my property for the sum of seventy sovereigns. She was then about eight years old (a half-bred mare by "Goodwood"), and her owner, a small tradesman at Northampton, would frequently drive her long distances to a meeting, win a race or two, and drive her home again, frequently towards the small hours, having broken the journey at various public-houses *en route*. "Umbrella" had never been properly trained, but had won over eighty races when I bought her, cheaply enough, owing to a suspicious hock, which her owner evidently feared would shortly break her down. But, on this occasion, this astute individual was sold, for the mare kept sound, and won me, in less than two years, over £1200 in stakes and matches alone. On one occasion (I think it was at Leek, in Staffordshire) she won three races in one day, and (incidentally) a match in the evening.[2]

[1] So called because of a small "blaze" in the shape of an umbrella, which had frequently been obliterated (for obvious reasons) by her previous owner.

[2] Beating "Bay Auster" (known at Leek as "Green Ginger") by "Skylark." (See Stud Book.)

Half the fun of galloway racing (which, as the reader has seen, also had its profitable side) was getting the better of one's opponents. This, of course, applies to every kind of sport, but in the one I allude to there was more latitude, (to use a mild expression), for the simple reason that everybody knew that his neighbour was unrestrained by the usual canons of fair play. It was, in short, like a game of écarté, where both players are quite aware that the other is nursing a spare king. The result was that swindles were perpetrated which under ordinary circumstances, would have warned the delinquents for life, but which were here called "sharp practice," and regarded as rather meritorious than otherwise. I need scarcely say that the above remarks do not apply to myself as a patron of the Galloway Turf!

For instance, my eyes were considerably opened when I purchased "Umbrella," and her late owner gratuitously threw in the following advice: "If you want her to 'lower,'" said he, "just say 'PST.' Don't put her under the 'pricker' any more; she knows all about it." This was all Greek to me until it was further explained that a "pricker" is a standard, into which a steel point has been inserted. On touching the withers, this causes the animal to flinch, and lose a couple of inches in stature, decreasing, for every inch so lost, 7 lb in the weight to be carried. But this was quite unnecessary with "Umbrella," who would instinctively

crouch down at the mere sight of a measuring-rod, without a word from me. Her real height was just under 15 hands, but I always got her in at 14.2 without difficulty, and frequently ran her at 14 hands.[1] On one occasion at Hurlingham (where, by the way, she won three silver cups, and two at Ranelagh, in one season) I actually got her down, for a bet, to 13.2! And Mr. Reginald Herbert, (who measured her), will perhaps remember the occurrence, as he was much amused at the time. "Umbrella" was a marvellous stayer, with a rare turn of speed, but, to the unpractised eye, was anything but attractive. I won many a match with her on this account, for people, unaware of her performances, were liable to judge by appearances, and often conceded weight when they should have received it. Talking of matches, I made one once with an Irish gentleman (whom I will call O'Brien), famous for his "sharpness"—even on the Galloway Turf—and I was warned that, whatever happened, I was eventually bound to get the worst of it. O'Brien owned a smart bay pony, which had never been beaten over a mile, but it was a non-stayer, and I was therefore rather surprised when he wrote offering to run my mare at level weights, over her favourite distance, (a mile and a half on the flat), for £100 a side, at the Warwick Meeting. Of course I jumped at this, and the match was

[1] This method of measuring was then permissible, except at Hurlingham and Ranelagh.

made, O'Brien undertaking to write to the clerk of the course and get it printed on the card.

I had previously told him that I should not be in England on the appointed date, or even he would scarcely have attempted the barefaced "ramp" which I am about to relate. Owing to a sudden change of plans, however, I did not go abroad, and only decided on the morning of the match to run down to Warwick and see it run, not even warning the lad who was to ride my mare of my intention. Ours was the first race of the day, but judge of my dismay when, on arrival at Warwick, I saw the distance printed as one mile, (which made it an absolute certainty for my opponent), instead of the distance agreed upon. It was a case of "diamond cut diamond," and I resolved, after a moment's reflection, to pay back Mr. O'Brien in his own coin. When I reached the course, the ponies were already at the post, but I secretly made my way to the top of the stand, and resolved to let them "run it out." I had, of course, no intention either of paying, or receiving, the stakes, my sole object being to pay out Mr. O'Brien for his rascality by suddenly appearing, at the conclusion of the race, and proclaiming it void.

"Umbrella" did not win; in fact, this was one of the few occasions on which, just as I had foreseen, she was badly beaten. Immediately after the race, I found O'Brien in the paddock, receiving the congratulations of his friends, and his face, when I

announced my decision, became scarlet with rage; but, of course, he had nothing to say, as I had the signed agreement in my pocket. Also, the swindle was palpable, for, when I offered to run his pony again, on the original terms, he flatly refused. So the matter ended, but Mr. O'Brien was determined to have some revenge for his Waterloo. Leaving the course that afternoon, I was saying good-bye to Colonel H——, one of the stewards, and the most sedate and particular of men, and, as ill-luck would have it, the Irishman saw us shaking hands. "Take care, Colonel, or you'll scorch your fingers," he cried, in a stentorian voice, greatly to my discomfiture and his own delight!

"Umbrella's" triumphs were not confined to this side of the Channel, as before I purchased her she had already won a valuable pony race at Dieppe, beating a field of twenty and running in the colours of Sir William Call. A pot of money was landed on this occasion, when the mare ran, (I think), in the name of "Blue Bonnet," and started at sixteen to one. But the true form of this little wonder may be gauged by the fact that I once tried her to give a three-year-old called "Haverhill" 5 lb., and a two lengths' beating, over a mile and a half. And when I add that "Haverhill" had previously run "Bruce" to a neck, in the Windsor Castle Stakes at Ascot, (both being two-year-olds at level weights), the reader may form some idea as to what constituted a "racing pony" in those days. For "Bruce" was fourth in

the Derby of '82, and a few days later won the Grand Prix in Paris. Poor "Umbrella"! She died (when in foal to "Cœruleus") while I was abroad in Australia, and I pen these lines with ink taken from one of her silver-mounted hoofs—a souvenir of probably the gamest little animal of her size ever known in England, or anywhere else.

Another discarded plater which I purchased at Tattersall's for thirty-odd guineas, and ran as a "pony," was "Kasimira," a nice little mare belonging to the late W. Stevens. "Kasimira" stood 15.2, but took so kindly to the standard that she won twice, on the same day, at Chandler's Ford, as 14.3, beating large fields and netting a good sum in stakes and bets. But she never ran again, being very unsound, or ten times the price I paid would never have bought her. For, before "Kasimira" became a "pony," she had run third in the Lincoln Cup, (starting second favourite), and had won races in good company at Birmingham and Croxton Park. On this occasion, Fred Russell accompanied me to Chandler's Ford, and afterwards related his experiences in, I think, the *Sporting Times*, in such amusing, (though slightly exaggerated), terms, that I reproduce the article.

"A DAY'S PONY-RACING.

"It was early one morning, when the door of my humble apartment was burst open, and in rushed my friend Sloper,[1] who proceeded to explain that the

[1] "Sloper" has always been my nickname, though how it originated remains a mystery.—H. de W.

object of his early visit was to carry me off to some pony-races, in which three of his stable were to compete. In vain I protested that I knew nothing of pony-racing. I was assured that the simplicity of 'photography in three lessons' was as nothing compared to this particular branch of sport, and when I put the question as to the *locale*, I was told 'it was no distance.' This I ultimately found meant six and a half hours in the train. I pleaded for a slight delay for breakfast, but this was denied me, Sloper saying that no one ever 'breakfasted pony-racing'; and this accursed sentence was continually rung into my ears throughout the journey. To our 'going pony-racing' Sloper attributed such incidents as that I should pay for the cab, that there was time for him to have a drink, but not for me, and finally, when I remonstrated at being hurled into a dirty third-class carriage, I was once more informed that this was customary to sportsmen about to engage in our proposed pastime. The compartment rapidly filled with other gentlemen, evidently bound on the same errand as ourselves, and had I not been prepared by this time for any eccentricity on the part of patronizers of pony-racing, I should rather have thought from their appearance that I was going to witness a prize-fight. I could at once see that my companion was regarded with a certain amount of awe, and as soon as we were fairly on the way, he was inundated with questions as to how 'the old mare' was? How had his new pony turned out?

Was he going to run anything? To these queries he replied that the 'old mare' had broken down, that his new pony was dead, and he did *not* mean to run anything. Now these statements—knowing as I did that the old mare and the new pony were at that moment trundling along in a horse-box only a few feet behind us—fairly took my breath away, and I could only assume that my friend was taking his equine cripples to view the scenes of their former triumphs, much in the same way that Dr. Barnardo takes his boys for an airing. After a wearisome journey we arrived at our destination, where the steeds were unboxed, without the smallest attempt at concealment on the part of any one but myself, who deemed it only prudent to conceal my watch in my boot, as it had by this time become dusk. We turned in early that night, and next morning we started for the scene of the contentions. I was prepared for a somewhat curious scene by my previous day's experience of the worthy patrons of the Galloway Turf, but the carnival at which I was an unwilling assistant placed everything I had imagined —not in the shade, but in coal-hole darkness. 'The old mare' was the first saddled of our lot to engage in a trial of speed. No sooner did she make her appearance, than there was a unanimous yell of 'Objection.' On inquiry I ascertained that the race was only for ponies 14.2, and that the crowd was objecting to the whilom broken-down animal as being over height—some of them even suggesting

that she was nearer sixteen hands, and even to my inexperienced eye she certainly did seem remarkably tall for her alleged size. However, by making her lie down she passed muster. Now was Sloper's turn. Casting his eye round, he saw a smart-looking bay pony—to see was to act with Sloper—so accordingly he shouted 'Objection,' and made a formal protest to the animal on the ground of over-height. The pony was at once placed under the standard, and found to be half an inch *under* the required height, amidst the derisive yells of the mob. By this time I was beginning to feel thoroughly uncomfortable. Not so Sloper, who, when he was not objecting, was partaking of refreshment in a tent. The race was run, and was won by the smart bay pony, when, to my horror, my friend coolly objected to her again, protesting that she might have *grown during the race!* An indescribable scene ensued, but I did not witness much of it. By this time my reason had fled, and I am told that I was discovered embracing a sheep in a meadow, murmuring, 'Don't you object to me, and I won't object to you.' However, by careful treatment I gradually recovered, and have now determined to devote my whole energy to gardening, pigeon-flying, or keeping guinea-pigs—anything but pony-racing. BRABBIT."

Apparently, therefore, the above meeting was a memorable one for my old friend, and I also recall that day with very mixed feelings. For although we

did well at Chandler's Ford, I might have done much better at Kempton Park, where a mare, (which had been given me by a friend disgusted with her repeated failures), unexpectedly won the Sunbury Steeplechase in a canter, at very long odds, and when I had not a shilling on. This was "Lang Syne," by "Cambuslang"–"Constancy," who had previously run so badly that I should not even have run her, had not a friend shared the entrance fee. Ten days later, she again won the Middlesex Steeplechase at Kempton, and in such hollow style, that I sent her to the late Joseph Lowe at Ilsley, to be trained for the Liverpool Grand National. "Lang Syne" was a little mare (not much bigger than "Umbrella"), and started for the Aintree blue ribbon at 66 to 1. She was ridden by Tom Hale of Wroughton, and the second time round was bang up in front with the leaders to the last fence, but one, into the racecourse. Here, however, she collided with "Gamecock," and both came down heavily, my mare scrambling to her feet and galloping in fourth—but, alas! riderless—to "Roquefort," "Frigate," and "Black Prince." "Gamecock," by the way, won this race the following year. Few men, I imagine, have gone so near winning the greatest steeplechase in the world with an animal which had cost them nothing but training and travelling expenses!

"Lang Syne" had been badly kicked in the fall, and showed signs of lameness, so I resolved to give her a rest, and keep her exclusively for the following

year's event at Aintree. But now my prosperity was fated to receive the *coup de grace* which so often follows a run of good luck. For after going great guns in her final gallop at Ilsley, before leaving for Liverpool, she broke down so badly as to close her racing career, although she afterwards bred many winners in Ireland. Only that morning, before the accident occurred, I had received a telegram from Captain Roddy Owen offering a very large sum for the mare, which, however, I refused. And that, I think, was the hardest piece of luck I have ever had, (at any rate, where racing is concerned), and with this instance of the glorious uncertainty of our national sport, I close the chapter of my brief experience of the English Turf, legitimate and otherwise.

IX

TWO NASTY SPILLS—VIÂ MELBOURNE TO CHINA —AN AWKWARD MISTAKE

ALTHOUGH horse-racing is, and always has been, the ideal sport of my life, I was also fond in my youth of running and jumping, especially of the latter, as various portions of my anatomy can testify. For my performances in this line were not always confined to the sward and cinder-track, but were accomplished under such unusual conditions that I still retain some trifling souvenirs, in the shape of a broken arm and knee-cap. The latter I received at Leamington, one summer evening, when jumping out of the first-floor window of a house[1] on the parade nearly opposite the Clarendon Hotel. This was done for a bet—a dozen of champagne, which scarcely atoned for the wearisome fortnight in bed (to say nothing of the doctor's bill) which followed. But the worst fall I ever had, while indulging in these erratic feats, occurred in a cathedral town in the west of England, and on this occasion, although I escaped with slight injury, it was only by the intervention of

[1] The house still exists, and its ground floor was then occupied by a grocer, Mr. Knibb.

Providence that I was not killed outright. The cathedral close at L——, the town in question, is surrounded by lofty iron railings, with granite gateways at intervals, the parapets of which are about fifteen feet high and surmounted by massive stone urns of great antiquity. I was then the guest of a certain regiment, and walking home to my hotel, one moonlit night after mess, my host casually remarked that a few evenings previously, a brother officer had endeavoured to climb to the top of one of the aforesaid parapets, and failed. This was too much for me. A solitary policeman was dozing at his post on the other side of the sacred building, and there was no one else visible, so I threw off my dress-coat and before my companion had time to protest, I was halfway up the granite column. Here, however, I remained, clinging like a limpet, for there was nothing to hold on to but the tiny holes and crannies worn into the smooth, perpendicular surface by time and weather. Gradually my feet and hands loosened their hold, and presently down I went, flat on the pavement, where I lay with torn clothes and bleeding fingers, much to the amusement of my companion, whose derisive laughter only served to put me on my mettle. Again I stormed the citadel, and this time, after a desperate struggle, I managed to get a good hold of the coping-stone, and hoist myself on to its surface, where I stood with one arm clasped round the urn, triumphantly waving the other to my friend below. Now it is probable that no human

being had ever set foot on that stone since the mediæval mason who had placed it there, or the security of its bulky ornament would certainly have been seen to. In any case, before I could get clear, the whole mass of sculpture slowly swayed to and fro, and then toppled over, and we fell to the ground with a crash, the urn landing partly on my body, but just clear of my head, shivering, as it did so, into a thousand fragments. Luckily the thing was crumbling with age, or I should never have lived to tell the tale. My friend picked me up, half dazed with the shock and badly bruised, but no bones were broken, and, in less time than it takes me to write it, we had made the best time on record, and safely entered the portals of my hotel. And apparently no one had witnessed the accident, for strolling out early the next morning, I was confronted on all sides with yellow police placards, offering a considerable reward for the apprehension of the culprit. On the previous night, we had resolved to call upon the Dean, and relate exactly what had occurred; but seeing that the matter had reached such a serious stage, I deemed it wiser to take my departure, quietly and without delay! Nevertheless, I would gladly have made good, so far as was possible, the damage I had unintentionally caused, and should still be glad to do so, should this meet the eye of any reverend official connected with L—— Cathedral, who can recognize the place from my description, and will communicate with me on the subject.

I think I may say that my passion for wandering about the world was first brought about by an accident of this kind, which prevented my riding for a considerable time and turned my attention to travel as an alternative occupation. On this occasion, a merry party were spending New Year's Eve with my friend Russell, at a house he then occupied on the outskirts of London. I think it was Freddy Hobson (who, a few years previously, had won the Grand National on "Austerlitz") who started the subject of athletics, by describing how he had once had to run for his life on a French racecourse, pursued by an infuriated crowd, who, as they had backed his mount, would not admit that the horse had been fairly beaten. From running we got to the subject of jumping, and a spirited discussion took place as to whether any one present could negotiate our host's front gate—one of those formidable wooden barriers, nearly five feet high, which screen the gardens of suburban houses from the public roadway. "I will wager a tenner 'Sloper' does it," said Russell, and the bet was taken, I think by poor Shirley Brooks, a son of the famous novelist. It was then past midnight, and a layer of snow, which had fallen earlier in the evening, had frozen hard, making both the take-off and landing as slippery as ice. But I should have fallen in any case, for my foot just caught the top of the gate, and brought me heavily down on the other side, but on an asphalt pavement, with a deep cut on the head and a fracture just above the right elbow.

They carried me indoors, while some one went for an adjacent surgeon, unfortunately for myself, a beardless youth, who had been celebrating the advent of a New Year. This worthy descendant of Bob Sawyer scoffed at the idea of surgical splints, but cheerfully got to work, and, (primed with stimulants at frequent intervals), set the broken limb with the fragments of an old cigar-box. The result is that, to this day, my right arm is considerably shorter than the other, and that, at the time, complications set in which, for many months, rendered the limb practically useless. Thus was I compelled to give up race-riding for a while, (or, as it eventually proved, for ever), and travel seemed to me the most pleasant and profitable mode of passing the time till I should be sound again.

So, after mature deliberation, I resolved to select the route followed by the everyday globe-trotter, when he encircles the earth by the aid of a Cook's ticket. I did not, however, complete the commonplace and wearisome "Grand Tour," but branched off at Colombo for Australia, where I witnessed the Melbourne Cup, and duly realized that racing in Victoria is infinitely better managed, so far as personal comfort is concerned, than in England. I then visited New South Wales, staying for a short time with a friend who owned a sheep farm in a remote portion of that colony. And here I was fortunate enough to meet one Father Woods, a Catholic priest, who had been a friend of one of my

favourite heroes in real life, the late Adam Lindsay Gordon, and who had much to relate anent that ill-fated poet, and his tragic death on the seashore near Melbourne. The Father had ridden many a hundred miles, and spent months alone in the bush, with Gordon, who never moved without a well-worn copy of Homer in his pocket. For Gordon's classical knowledge was only equalled by his marvellous horsemanship, and his famous verses, entitled *How we Beat the Favourite*, will probably never be surpassed, as a sporting poem, in the English language. Lindsay Gordon, by the way, was born in England, and was not, as many people imagine, of colonial extraction.

While staying with my sheep-farming friend, I witnessed a rather amusing incident, which occurred at a supper-party given on the occasion of my host's birthday to the men employed on his "ranche." The table was laid in a marquee, and at the appointed hour the guests filed in—a rough, uncouth lot, so unused to the usages of polite society that no one seemed to know what to do with the starched and snowy napkin laid in front of him; one man laying it gingerly by his plate, another secretly throwing it under the table, and so on. But the foreman, a bearded German giant from South Africa, evidently suspecting that these mysterious adjuncts were not placed there for show, slowly unfolded his serviette, and proceeded, with great deliberation, to blow his nose therein, with a sound like a trumpet blast! Then, gazing around the table with an air

of social superiority, he crumpled up the napkin, put it in his pocket, and turned his attention to the dish before him.

The excitement caused by the exploits of the world-renowned Ned Kelly and his gang had not died out when I was in Australia, and I was taken to see a sister of the famous bushranger, Miss Kate Kelly, who officiated as barmaid in a third-rate saloon in Melbourne. She was a pretty, modest-looking girl, and I could scarcely picture her as the intimate associate of the Bandit of Glenora—perhaps the most cruel, cold-blooded monster that ever swung for his sins. But Miss Kelly was rather proud of her brother's achievements, and had invented a fiery cocktail known as a "Glenora" as a tribute to his memory!

Australia was, in those days, a charming place to visit, for an English traveller was everywhere received with kindness and hospitality, and in summer the free, open-air life was an idyllic one. So I remained there for two months and then sailed for China, (viâ Ceylon), in a P. and O. steamer; a long and dreary voyage, which was, however, enlivened by a somewhat humorous incident, which occurred on the last stage of the journey, between Singapore and Hong Kong. Amongst our passengers were two ladies, on their way to join a North China mission; the one plain and elderly, the other (whom I will call Miss B.) rather good-looking, and many years younger. The latter was making her first trip

to the Far East, and was therefore the more zealous in her efforts to save heathen souls. Of these a number came aboard, in the shape of Chinese coolies, at Singapore, and the spiritual welfare of one—a wild-eyed brawny giant—was taken in hand by Miss B., who at once singled him out from his companions as a likely subject for conversion. The lady was, therefore, with him most of the day, and they were generally to be seen, pacing the lower deck at sunset, with clasped hands, the Celestial wearing a pleased, but puzzled, expression, as though striving to interpret the meaning of these agreeable, but unusual, attentions on the part of the English "missy." For, being unacquainted with the Chinese language, Miss B.'s ministrations were carried on solely by signs, which, although meant to betoken a purely platonic affection, were regarded by the Chinaman in quite a different light.

Perhaps luckily, I was on deck with the second officer when the *dénouement* occurred, on the night of the third day out from Singapore. All the passengers had turned in, and the ship was quietly gliding through a moonlit sea, while we lay on long deck-chairs enjoying the cool breeze and a cigar. Suddenly, the stillness was broken by a piercing shriek, and my companion started to his feet with an oath. Another scream quickly followed, and we then saw the white figure of a woman dart out of a deck-cabin into the moonlight, and rush madly in our direction. My friend caught the terrified girl

just in time to save her from jumping overboard, and, a moment after, I had seized the pigtail of a Chinaman, (the convert), who, heedless of all else, was in full pursuit of the zealous but misguided Miss B. That is the story (necessarily curtailed), and it clearly shows that, in some cases, it is perhaps as well to master the language of the "untutored savage," before trying to convert him.

I have never visited a place in any portion of the world which, on first acquaintance, so fascinated me as Hong Kong, and I have returned there, perhaps a dozen times, since, only to find it as fresh and charming as ever. For one thing, there is no better fellow living than the English merchant in China, and I have never met with such hospitality, in any part of the world, as that lavished on me by my countrymen in the Treaty Ports. Moreover, that terrible being, the British snob, so often met with in less remote portions of the Far East, is here conspicuous by his absence, nor would he be tolerated in communities where even the Government officials are more or less cosmopolitan in their mode of life. Hong Kong is one of the few places in the world where you need never feel bored, if only for the fact that there are numberless places to get away to—Canton, as weird and interesting, in its way, as Pekin itself, or Macao, the "Monte Carlo of the Far East," where you may lose quite as much money at "Fan-tan" and "Poo-chi," as at "Roulette" or "Trente-et-Quarante" at Monaco, although there is, unfortu-

nately, no Smith's Bank handy to replenish your supplies. But I did not visit either place, being quite satisfied to enjoy the lazy life in that pleasant English oasis, with its picnics, excursions to the Peak, and pleasant, informal dinners and dances. And here I may remark that Hong Kong contains more pretty and smartly clad women, for its size, than any British settlement I have ever visited; for, twenty years ago, a really well-dressed Englishwoman was rather a rarity east of Suez. I was therefore surprised, on landing here, to behold the unusual apparition of two ladies, so exquisitely gowned, that they might have walked out of the "Pesage" at "Longchamps" on a "Grand Prix" day. They spoke, however, with an American accent, and I subsequently discovered that Hong Kong and Shanghai are the favourite resorts of New York and San Francisco *demi-mondaines*, who are often as attractive and well turned out as their Parisian sisters.

At the time of my visit, Hong Kong had only one drawback, in the shape of Asiatic cholera, which somewhat curtailed my stay, for the disease was of so virulent a type, that I lunched one day near a man at the club, and, returning from a drive in the evening, saw a hearse awaiting him at the door of his office. Another unpleasant experience I had on this occasion was a typhoon, which visited the place two days before I left it, and occasioned serious loss of life and property. But fortunately typhoons, like

game, have their close season, and those travelling to China for pleasure should always bear in mind the old shellback's proverb—

June—too soon,
July—stand by,
August—yóu must,
September—remember,
October—all over—

with regard to these cataclysms of nature, for a typhoon[1] (either on land or sea) is an experience which few men care to repeat. Indeed, I am not sure that a typhoon on board ship, (of course in blue water), is not preferable to one ashore, and I have experienced both. On this occasion, the usual spell of oppressive, misty weather presaged the tempest, which burst upon us so suddenly that I was unable to reach my hotel, only a few yards distant from the club, where I was lunching at the time. No one who has never witnessed one of these hurricanes can form any conception of its stupendous force and fury. Most of us in the club took refuge in the cellar, except one misguided person who made an attempt to reach his office across the road, and was whirled up like a straw the moment he emerged from the portico, and dashed with such force against its pillars that he lay, stunned and bleeding, with a broken leg, and was, with great difficulty, dragged inside again. All that night we were in darkness, for electric and telegraph wires were blown to atoms—and no wonder

[1] Derived from the Chinese words "Tai-Fun" or "Great Wind."

—by the terrific blast which flung large steamers high and dry upon the beach, and twisted iron girders as though they had been of tissue-paper. Several European houses were wrecked, and, of course, the flimsy native dwellings were scattered wholesale. But, by dawn the next morning, the wind had moderated, and we were able to obtain some much-needed refreshment of a solid description—our temporary refuge having been fortunately well supplied with liquid refreshment. This was by no means a severe typhoon—according to old residents—although it wrecked quite a fifth of the town, and rendered several hundreds of natives homeless. A large English liner was blown ashore, and a German barque went to pieces, while the roadstead, next morning, was strewn with the wreckage of numberless junks and native craft. Over a hundred people were killed and severely injured by falling *débris*, and the damage was estimated at nearly a million dollars. So if this was not a severe typhoon, it was probably a fair imitation of one! Besides, I am always sceptical as to the assertions of the "oldest inhabitant" in such cases.

Cairo was a delightful place in those days, for it had not become vulgarized by American trippers and mammoth hotels, and I spent a pleasant month there on the way home. The Egyptian War was just over, and the place therefore resembled Byron's definition of Malta: "a little military hothouse!" The gambling saloons were then in full swing, and,

although obviously manipulated in favour of the bank, one could generally win money by a very simple device—that of staking silver on the even chances, against reckless punters playing in gold. The Cairo hells have, of course, long been done away with, but similar establishments still exist at Port Said, where the same system generally meets with equal success.

Amongst the many English people I met at Cairo that year were the Major of a line regiment, then quartered in the citadel, and his wife. V—— was a typical stage Major, pompous, not to say dictatorial, in manner, with a rubicund face and portly frame, acquired during a lengthened residence in India. Neither his liver nor temper had been improved by over-indulgence in curries and pegs, for I have seldom met a more crusty, discontented bear. Mrs. V—— was years younger than her spouse—a pretty little woman, who, once clever and amusing, had been snubbed into meekness and submission by her sulky lord and master. The V——s were returning to England viâ Marseilles, by the same steamer as myself, and, in a weak moment, I agreed to act as their cicerone in Paris, a place which they had never visited, and where they now purposed to make a short stay.

But we had not been installed for many hours at the Hôtel Meurice before I bitterly repented my rash promise, which I could not well retract, seeing that neither of my fellow-travellers spoke a word of

French. For the Major was a terrible nuisance, continually finding fault, and living on terms of armed neutrality with all foreigners. Luckily the first day was a fine one and we spent a long day at Fontainebleau, which so fatigued my friends that they retired shortly after dinner, and left me the evening free to myself. But another dreary day had to be got through, and this fact was the more disconcerting when I awoke to find it pouring with rain. The month was March; the day was cold and raw. How to get through the next twenty-four hours? The Major would not hear of churches or the Louvre, and a long, wearisome morning had exhausted the Arcades of the Rue de Rivoli and Palais Royal. But, while sitting at breakfast, a bright idea struck me. Why not the waxworks? Mrs. V—— was charmed with the idea, and even her husband allowed it was a good one. So we set out in a closed *fiacre* along the dismal, rain-swept Boulevards, to the "Musée Grévin," but, alas! it was closed for repairs. Already V—— was beginning the usual grumble when interrupted by the *cocher*, who, it seemed, knew of an exhibition of models, equally good, near the "Bastille." "*Tout le monde chic y va*," added the man, and I, (in my character of mentor), falsely averred that I knew the place, and it was well worth a visit, more for the sake of pleasing Mrs. V——, who I could see was anxious to go, than anything else. V——, of course, was all against it, but sullenly consented.

It was a stuffy, gloomy building; as the Major growled, and probably with some truth—the very place to pick up a fever. However, we stared at the kings and queens, eminent statesmen, murderers, and the other attractions which adorn a place of this description, until we came to a door surmounted with the announcement—

LES SOUTERRAINS
SURPRISES COMIQUES

in coloured lights.

"What is this?" contemptuously inquired the Major. "As great a swindle as the rest?" "Oh, no!" I replied, "this is great fun; you must not miss it on any account," and, having paid an extra fee, we descended a spiral staircase into a kind of gaslit cellar. Here we found a number of mechanical figures, and, as ill-luck would have it, a bright yellow door let into the wall immediately facing the entrance. Over it was a white zinc placard, bearing the legend in huge black letters: "*Trouvez Joséphine!* (*Mettez deux sous, elle est à vous*)." "What on earth can this be?" said Mrs. V——, approaching it with amused interest, while the Major, from behind us, kept up a running fire of derogatory remarks. "Some tomfoolery, my dear. Better leave it alone." How devoutly, a moment after, I wished we had! "Oh, this is the best joke of the lot," said I, carelessly, and without the faintest notion of what was concealed

behind the mysterious portal. "Just you watch while I put a coin in!"

. . . . .

We found Josephine! I could not, really, describe how she appeared to our astounded gaze! Suffice it to say that Josephine was clearly revealed, under such conditions as could only have been conceived by the most dissolute Parisian artist! "You scoundrel!" hissed the Major, now livid with passion, into my ear. "If it were not for my wife I would have you out to-morrow!" And even at that awful moment I could not help noting the incongruity of the threat, for a duel would surely have been fought to avenge the lady! However, Madame had already disappeared up the narrow stairs, whither the Major, with a parting curse, hastily followed her. Of course there was nothing to be done, for all excuses would have been useless after my assertion that I had already witnessed, and enjoyed, that unspeakable jest in wax! I never saw, nor indeed heard, of the V——s again, which is perhaps as well, and what they thought of me, I leave the reader to imagine! Yet, truth to tell, that same evening after a solitary dinner at the "Café Anglais," accompanied by a certain vintage of claret, for which that peerless establishment is justly renowned, I could not altogether deny that the shameless Josephine had been a blessing in disguise. And, anyway, I then and there registered a solemn vow that, under no circumstances, would I

ever again act as "guide, philosopher, and friend" to an English married couple, of inflexible morals, in Paris.

So ended my second voyage to foreign climes, which, as I have said, inspired me with a taste for travel, and led to more important journeys into the great unknown.

X

MY FIRST EXPEDITION—A FRENCH DON JUAN—THE OLD PELICAN CLUB

I WAS lunching one day in Hong Kong with a friend, at his house overlooking the blue and busy harbour. Coffee and cigars had been served, and my host was in a contemplative mood.

"How curious it is to think," he said, suddenly, "that a man could hire a sampan on this island, cross over there, (waving his cheroot towards the distant mainland), and walk dryshod to Paris."

"I should think it would take him some time," I remarked vaguely, never having studied the subject.

"Probably years," rejoined my friend conclusively, and then changed the conversation.

But more than once, during that afternoon, my mind reverted to the geographical problem we had discussed earlier in the day. The mere idea of travelling from China to Europe overland, instead of by the usual sea route, seemed so original and fascinating that I could not get it out of my head. So that evening, at the club, I had the atlas out, and carefully measured the distance from where I stood

across Asia to Paris, being quite unaware that such a voyage, in a straight line, would be practically impossible.

But here was a chance, I thought, of doing something just as exciting, and certainly more useful, than riding losers in England. Moreover, I could write a little, having already published a book on Borneo (now happily out of print!), and surely a work on unknown Siberia would go a long way towards defraying the cost of the voyage. So, after long and careful consideration, I went to bed that night fully resolved to have a try at this leviathan journey. After all, I could but fail, and further research in the club library informed me that a French traveller, (one Victor Meignan), had once actually made his way from Paris to Pekin, by way of Siberia and the Great Desert of Gobi. The thing was therefore possible, and, according to Meignan, success was mainly a question of patience and physical endurance, with which latter, I may say, I have been fairly well endowed by nature. But until, some years later, I became inured to it, I have always dreaded intense cold. Now the Frenchman had accomplished the feat in winter-time; I had, therefore, an excuse for making my attempt in summer, being blissfully ignorant that the journey was, at that season, infinitely more arduous and trying, on account of floods and impassable roads. I use the past tense, as the Trans-Siberian railway now glides swiftly across the steppes and deserts which I had to crawl

painfully over by the aid of horse, camel, and, occasionally, "Shanks's mare!"

Of course every one in Hong Kong said I was mad, and the old argument of "What is the use?" was dinned, *ad nauseam*, into my ears. Columbus was probably asked the same question by his friends, and so will aerial explorers of the future, for the majority of people never seem to realize that were it not for private enterprise, geographical and otherwise, we should now be riding in stage-coaches, and the telephone would still lie dormant in the womb of futurity. Only one man in the place, the Russian Consul, could tell me anything about the route; and I eventually took his advice, which was to start from Pekin, and follow the road taken by the tea-caravans through Mongolia and Siberia. After some delay my friend L—— joined me, and we left Pekin early in May, reaching Paris late in the following October, after a journey which, in those early days, seemed to me the acme of dullness, dirt, and general discomfort. This was the sole occasion upon which I ever took a companion, travelling merely for his amusement, for, on any serious expedition, friends are better left at home, unless they have some special duty to perform, and agree to obey orders.

I shall not enlarge upon this, nor any other of my journeys, seeing that the latter have already been described in works which I have written on the subject, and that technical details connected with exploration would be out of place in casual notes

of this kind. On the other hand, many things happen to an explorer, when in the wilds, which he may not deem it wise or worth while to mention in the published record of his adventures. For instance, when living with a Siberian tribe (the Tchukchis) on the desolate shores of Béring Straits, I was the unwilling witness of occurrences so unspeakably foul and inhuman that I dared not, at the time, commit them to paper for fear of hostile criticism. Again, while riding to India from European Russia, in 1889, certain things occurred in Persia and Baluchistan which have often caused much amusement in club and smoking-room, but which have never met the cold grey eye of a publisher's reader. And therefore, with this hitherto unpublished "flotsam and jetsam" of my wanderings, I shall try to occasionally entertain the reader, and may commence by relating an anecdote which occurred on the way from Pekin to Paris, and which at the time struck me as being rather droll. We had reached Kiakhta, a small town on the Russo-Chinese frontier, where we encountered the first Europeans after a five weeks' journey, across the Gobi Desert, from the Great Wall of China. Kiakhta is a queer place; an odd mixture of Mongolian barbarism and Russian (or rather Siberian) civilization. The only inn was a hovel, where we occupied a filthy room devoid of furniture, and lit by one grimy window looking on to a cow-yard, with an open cesspool. But we never slept in this gruesome apartment, being invited on



H.H. THE RANEE OF SARAWAK

the afternoon of our arrival to a dinner-party, which commenced at 8 p.m. and lasted well into the following day! And this is how it came about.

I was sitting with L——, dejectedly enough, in the aforesaid apartment, for our Tartar drivers and camels had departed, leaving us stranded until a *Tarantass*[1] and horses could be procured to resume that interminable and already irksome journey to Europe. Suddenly a visitor entered, clad in the ill-fitting broadcloth, high boots, and flat white cap worn by better-class Siberians in summer. The stranger said he was a tea-merchant, of whom there are many in Kiakhta, and who, although they live in wooden houses, and sleep in their clothes, would, even in England, be regarded as millionaires. These Siberian Rockefellers are neither refined nor intellectual, although they squander money like chaff on cards, riotous living, and rich Parisian toilettes for their women-folk. Most of them were of gigantic build (Siberians usually are), and this is where the joke comes in.

Our visitor asked us to dine with him that evening, an invitation which, having eaten nothing all day, was eagerly accepted. So punctually at eight we set out, and found about a dozen people assembled in our host's drawing-room: his wife, two other ladies, some Cossack officers from the barracks, a mathematical professor from the Government Schools, and the postmaster, a very important

[1] A Russian travelling-carriage drawn by three or more horses.

personage, on whom we were depending for transport to Irkutsk. Our hostess spoke French, so that the interval before dinner was less awkward than I had expected, but I was gradually dismayed to find, (being now faint from hunger), that this same interval was to be indefinitely prolonged, having yet to learn that Siberians generally dine towards midnight! It was, therefore, 11.30 before we adjourned to the dining-room, where a small table was set out with smoked fish, cheese, and caviar, flanked by numerous bottles of vodka, cognac, and other liqueurs, which were taken neat, there being no wine, or even water, visible. These *hors-d'œuvre* were eaten with the fingers, while every man in turn approached, and gravely drank my health, emptying, and also reversing, his glass if I did not quite drain mine. I had to dispose, in this way, of seven or eight glasses of fiery alcohol before dinner, (one diminutive chicken and a dish of cutlets), was served, for drink was evidently the object of the evening, and I soon heartily regretted that we had not put up with the nauseous, but at any rate substantial, fare at the inn. About 2 a.m. we returned to the drawing-room, the ladies retired, and more trays of vodka and cognac made their appearance. In vain we pleaded want of rest, for it was not only morally, but physically, impossible to escape from those brawny giants, most of them six feet high, and broad in proportion. Moreover, the postmaster would not hear of our departure, and it would have been fatal to offend *him*. So there we

were compelled to sit until nearly eight o'clock a.m., when English stout, (worth a guinea a bottle in Kiakhta), was handed round in small wine-glasses! I managed to see the ghastly entertainment out, (as I have frequently had to do since, in other parts of Siberia), but poor L—— succumbed about five o'clock in the morning, and fell asleep in his chair. Noticing this, the professor, a black-bearded Hercules, left his seat, took my friend up in his arms lengthways, like a baby, tenderly kissed him on both cheeks, and laid him full length on a sofa! During this proceeding, L—— awoke, and as, like many small men, my friend had a keen sense of his personal dignity, his infuriated features, as he vainly struggled to free himself, were a picture!

A few days later we witnessed at Irkutsk, in Siberia, a total eclipse of the sun. It happened about noon, one sweltering August day, which, a few moments before the occurrence, became so chilly that a greatcoat was necessary, while the sun was gradually obscured till it loomed like a ball of fire through a London fog. Then, gradually, a shadow crept across the fiery disc, darkening as it spread, until the latter looked like an apple, with a large piece bitten out. Ten minutes more, and the apple had disappeared. We were now in total darkness, under an inky sky ablaze with stars.

I do not think I ever felt more uncomfortable, save perhaps in an earthquake. The streets were full of terrified men and weeping women—the ignorant,

superstitious Siberian peasantry. Even animals were scared: horses neighed, dogs howled, and flocks of birds flew aimlessly, alarmed at this sudden fall of night in the busy daytime. It was like the end of the world, but happily was of short duration. In a few minutes the black veil was drawn aside, as if by some giant's invisible hand, the stars disappeared, and the city was once more laughing in the sunshine, under a blue and cloudless sky. But I do not wish to renew the experience.

On reaching England I published an account of the journey, but the work was necessarily so voluminous that one day poor Dick Grain, the famous entertainer, on being asked if he knew me, replied, "Do you mean the little man who writes big books?" Anyhow, this gave me a start in the literary line, for I sold the MS. for a substantial sum to Messrs. Chapman and Hall, and *Pekin to Calais by Land* soon ran into a second edition.

I first met Corney Grain (as he was better known to the general public) at the Orleans Club, to which I then belonged, and we became great friends, for he delighted in French people, and the humorous side of their character, and spoke the language perfectly. One of our mutual friends was a certain Baron de G——, who then passed a good deal of his time in London. The Baron was about sixty; short, stout, and partly bald, but, (according to his own account), was still very favourably regarded by the fair sex. With English women, however, this elderly Adonis

had one great fault to find: their coldness and lack of sympathy. As he told us one night, in strict confidence, over supper at the Garrick Club: "Your English women are beautiful, yes, indeed; but oh! how irresponsive! how cold! Figure to yourselves, my friends, that only the other evening I dined with that *imbécile* Jones — the well-known James Jones of Bayswater. You know him not? Ah, well, you miss nothing! After dinner, the man Jones begs me to escort his wife in a brougham to the theatre. And here I may tell you that I had, for some time, noticed a certain diffidence and shyness, which left no doubt in my mind as to the lady's feelings towards me. Also, she is very good-looking, so what would you have? *Sapristi!* we are not made of ice, we Bretons! Behold us then ensconced, *la belle* Jones and myself, in the brougham, while the *imbécile* followed us in a hansom-cab. Now, the interior of the carriage was lit by a lamp affixed to the cushion beside us, and we had only driven a short distance, when my companion buried her face in her hands, overcome, as I thought, by a mad and irresistible impulse, and whispered, 'Baron, will you kindly put the light out?'"

It would not be fair to relate precisely what occurred when the Baron had obeyed the lady's instructions. Suffice it to say that Mrs. Jones's amorous escort had entirely misconstrued her feelings and intentions. Thus it came to pass that the Baron suddenly found himself standing in the street

(as he described it, "*en plein Piccadilly*"), and there was no play that night, nor, indeed, on any other, for our misguided friend was never again entertained by the "*imbécile.*" Mrs. Jones, I subsequently ascertained, was, at the time of this adventure, a person of advanced years (a dear old lady, with snow-white hair and a married grandson) who occasionally suffered from weak eyes. And this is why she had, very naturally, begged the susceptible Baron to extinguish the light. But age, and even appearance, do not count when an amorous Frenchman thinks he has made an impression.

Poor Grain never forgot this story (which bears the merit of being absolutely true), but an almost equally good one was told of himself. This may, or may not, have been published, but will anyway bear repetition. Grain was entertaining some friends at his riverside cottage, and one morning, before breakfast, was standing with a friend, gazing out of the dining-room window. Suddenly one of the guests, having overbalanced himself from a window above, flashed past their vision to fall head foremost into a flower-bed, where he remained for a moment, his legs waving wildly in the air. "Marvellous fellow!" said the imperturbable host, placidly watching his struggling friend as though he had been some natural curiosity; "marvellous fellow! To be able to display such high spirits so early in the day!" Poor Dick Grain! He attended a lecture, which I delivered at the Savoy Hotel, only

a week before his death, and was that night as cheery and amusing as ever. No better fellow ever breathed, and as an artist, in his own particular line, we shall surely never see his like again.

About this period, I was lucky enough to be elected to the Beefsteak Club—that pleasant and exclusive coterie of one hundred members, where rank and wealth by no means ensure election. If the "Beefsteak" had any drawback, it was that I could never tear myself away until the small hours, and most of the members appeared to suffer from the same inconvenience. Sir Henry Irving, Dick Grain, Leslie Ward ("Spy" of *Vanity Fair*), Edmund Craigie, Charles Brookfield, Harry Kemble, Beerbohm Tree, Kendal, Talbot Smith, Stuart Wortley, the artist, are names that recur of those who, at that time, I met there most frequently, some of whom, alas! are now missing from that brilliant and amusing supper-table. And, by the way, it was when returning from one of these pleasant gatherings late at night, or rather early in the morning, that I met with an experience which nearly landed me in the grip of the law, and perhaps within measurable distance of the gallows itself.

I was then living in Clifford Street, and as it was a bright and starlit night, set out to walk home from the club. It was long past midnight, and Piccadilly was deserted, but, as I turned into Bond Street, I noticed a woman lying in the middle of the road, and, fearing she might have fainted, thoughtlessly

approached to see if I could render her any assistance. But, before I could reach it, the recumbent figure had leapt to its feet, and, in another moment, my throat was clutched by strong, sinewy fingers, while a hideous face, disfigured by drink, glared into mine. "Help! Police! He's trying to murder me!" The woman's shrieks rang through the silent streets, as I struggled to free myself from that iron grip—no easy matter, for this drunken fury was as muscular as a man. But at last I disengaged myself, as gently as possible, and my aggressor fell again prone on the ground, while I hailed a solitary hansom, which was crawling down Piccadilly, and drove swiftly away from the scene of the scuffle, firmly resolved never again to meddle with strangers of either sex in London at night-time.

I thought no more of the matter until, two days later, a card was handed to me at my club. "Inspector Baker, of Scotland Yard," wished to see me at once on important business; and I felt, instinctively, that the visit was connected with that midnight struggle. "Your name is Harry de Windt," said the Inspector, briskly producing a notebook, and coming at once to business; "and on Tuesday last, between the hours of one and two a.m., you were seen with a woman at the corner of Piccadilly and Bond Street?"

I admitted these facts, now feeling extremely uncomfortable. And this was not lost on the observant Mr. Baker, who thoughtfully reassured me.

"There is nothing to be anxious about, sir. I have only one question to ask you. When you first saw her, was the woman alone or did you notice any one in the vicinity? Nobody. Thank you. That is all. But now let me give you a word of advice: should such an occasion ever recur, *never run away.* Not long after you left her, this woman, (who has now been identified), was found dead on the spot where she fell after grappling with you. The cause of her death was heart disease, but she had also a nasty wound on the head, which may, or may not, have been self-inflicted. I am pretty sure it was, for there are bloodstains on some area railings which she had probably fallen against, close by in Albemarle Street. But if these had not been discovered, and other facts, which exclude the theory of foul play, it would probably have been my unpleasant duty to arrest you on suspicion. On the other hand, if you had waited until a policeman came up, told him your story, and given him your card, I should not even have had to trouble you with this visit. Of course the cabman, after what he saw, came straight to us at Scotland Yard after driving you home. Take my advice, sir, never run away"; and Mr. Baker shook me warmly by the hand, and took his departure, much to my relief and satisfaction.[1]

Another club to which I then belonged was the

[1] This incident was published by the Northern Newspaper Syndicate, Kendal, in the form of a short story entitled *In the Grip of the Law.*

old "Pelican," in Denman Street. The popular secretary was Ernest Wells, better known to his many friends as "Swears," a nickname given him by Hughie Drummond in facetious allusion to a well-known firm, and my old friend's tendency to *embonpoint* and occasional profanity.[1] The "Pelican" was essentially a sporting and bohemian club, and its supporters were of all grades of society, from the most distinguished members of the peerage, to the lesser lights of the stage. I never cared much for glove contests, although famous pugilists have fought at the "Pelican," but one could always drop in towards midnight for supper, and hear something worth listening to. Fred Leslie and Arthur Roberts, who were then drawing the town, the one at the "Gaiety" and the other at the "Avenue," were nightly habitués of the club, and were always "ready to oblige," accompanied by such artists at the piano as Teddy Solomon or Lionel Monckton. Charles Bertram, the conjurer, was also often there, with his marvellous card tricks and favourite catchword, "Isn't it wonderful!" But I could fill a chapter with the names of the good fellows and clever artists who used to render the place an infallible cure for the blues on the foggiest day. Of the former there was Bob Hope Johnstone, who gave me his recipe for a sauce with which I have sometimes successfully seasoned a nauseous meal in the wilds, and which consisted of—

[1] Swears and (S)wells.

1 tablespoonful Harvey Sauce,
1 „ Worcester Sauce,
1 „ English mustard,
A sprinkle of Cayenne pepper.

Its inventor called it "Good Intentions," a most appropriate name, derived from an old proverb.

Fred Leslie's death, from malignant typhoid fever, was a terrible shock to us all, for he had been at the club only three days before its occurrence. It is said that the sublime is often allied to the ridiculous, and this was the case at poor Fred's funeral. Amongst the many mourners was one Tod Brayley, who had once inherited a fortune from a wealthy uncle, but whom a riotous life had reduced to very low water. While leaving the cemetery, we paused with Tod to inspect a massive mausoleum, which he had erected in memory of his deceased benefactor, when, to our surprise, the bereaved nephew suddenly burst into an uncontrollable flood of tears. "Come, come, old man," said a friend consolingly; "try and bear up. We all know what a fine old fellow your uncle was, but, after all, he has been dead for some years now."

"Oh! It's not that," cried the tearful Tod. "I was not thinking of him, poor old chap, but of all the money I spent on this b-beautiful m-monument, which would have come in so handy just now!"

Carlton Blyth was another frequent habitué of the "Pelican," from which an adjournment was frequently

made to his pretty house in Berkeley Street, where *soirées dansantes* were given on an average about twice a week—informal, but delightful, dances, graced by the prettiest ladies in Bohemia, invitations to whom were thus worded in the "agony" column of the *Morning Post*: "Hullo there! Boys and Girls! Carlton at Home Tuesday and Saturday this week!" And of other cheery companions, most of whom possessed (what is so rare in these days) an interesting personality, there were Dudley Ward, "Kim" Mandeville (afterwards Duke of Manchester), John Delacour, "Q," Loftus Thornhill, Granville and Esme Gordon, Joe Hornsby, Walter Pallant, Colonel Roberts (of Scotland Yard), "Ballyhooley Martin," and "Owen Hall," the clever pen-name adopted by my friend the late Jimmy Davis, to imply the impecunious days which preceded his brilliant career as a playwright. Nor should I forget the immortal "Fatty" Coleman, of such colossal proportions that he could only squeeze into a specially designed armchair, which bore his name in gold lettering, and was as important an institution of the establishment as Dr. Johnson's seat at the "Cheshire Cheese." But I am writing now of people most of whom are dead and gone, though they all played a part, and contributed their share of amusement, in those pleasant, if somewhat misspent, days of London life in the eighties.

Of those now departed poor Harry M—— (once of the "Blues") was one of the best-looking and cheeriest, and his adventures on the Continent (where,

on leaving the service, he chiefly lived) savoured of one of Ouida's heroes. Few young men of the present day can say they have fought duels to the death with three consecutive members of one family; but this is what actually happened in Germany, and on two occasions M—— killed his man, suffering therefor a lengthened imprisonment in a Russian frontier fortress, although none of the quarrels had been of his seeking. For he was a generous, kind-hearted fellow, and his early death was no doubt hastened by the fatalities which he had unwillingly caused.

Gone also to the happy hunting-grounds are that jovial old peer Lord ——, and his brother, whose prefix "The Honourable" became also a nickname, in facetious allusion to its owner's rather peculiar methods at games of chance. Lord —— was a noted billiard player, and one evening his brother turned up at the club with a wealthy American, who also fancied himself at the game. Eventually a match was made for £100 a side, to take place on the following day. The next night "The Honourable" strolled in, as usual, to supper, and was eagerly questioned as to the result of the match. "Well, Tim?" asked one. "Did the Yankee win?" "Did the Yankee win?" repeated Tim, with a withering glance at the speaker; "Jerry with the cue, and me at the marking-board, and you can ask me, '*Did the Yankee win*'!"

Another popular Pelican was Joe Posno, who was accidentally killed some years later. Now, Joe, who

was a great friend of mine, one day, much to my surprise, suddenly entered the bonds of matrimony, and, about two days after the event, invited me to dine, and make his wife's acquaintance. I arrived, however, to find that the lady had been summoned out of town by a sick relative, and would not be home, (as I understood) until the following day. So Joe and I dined together, while his unusually hideous bulldog dozed, with one eye open, on the sofa. Later on in the evening, a discussion arose as to the methods of a famous French wrestler then appearing at the "Alhambra," and Posno, who was an adept at the art, pushed aside the furniture and gave me a practical illustration of a certain "fall." Suddenly the bulldog awoke, and seeing me, as he thought, attacking his master, bounded off the sofa, and silently nipped me so firmly in the back of the thigh, that it took quite a minute to choke the brute off. The bite felt like a bad one, but it was naturally out of my range of vision, and my host rushed off, accompanied by his bloodthirsty friend, to get some caustic from a neighbouring chemist. When alone I became rather anxious, (having a dread of hydrophobia), and finally resolved to ascertain, for myself, the extent of the mischief. This was, however, impossible in the dining-room, the mirror being out of reach, so I walked down the passage, and, seeing a door ajar, entered a bedroom, with a large cheval-glass in the corner—the very thing needed for an inspection. The apartment was only dimly lit by turned-down gas-jets, but these

were sufficient for my purpose, and having carefully scrutinized the wound, I returned, considerably reassured, to the dining-room. Presently Posno came in, having failed to procure what he wanted, but begged me not to worry, as the wound was not a severe one.

"Yes, I know," I replied. "It is nothing. I have just had a look at it." Joe smiled incredulously at this apparently physical impossibility. "I went to your room," I added casually, "and the cheval-glass there soon showed me that——"

"Good heavens, man! That's not my room!" exclaimed Joe, seizing my arm with a look of horror. "That is my wife's room, and she came back unexpectedly this evening, and is lying in bed there!"

Fortunately the lady was asleep, (or Joe said she was), and sent a message to say she hoped that I would lunch on the following day. But somehow or other I did not accept the invitation.

XI

SOME WANDERINGS: AT HOME AND AFAR—AN INTERESTING BLACKGUARD—I MEET MADAME DE NOVIKOFF

Our long and adventurous land journey from China to France had inspired me with a taste for ventures of this kind, and I soon wearied of a prosaic life in London, and set to work to plan another expedition. As Lord Byron is said to have written, in an unpublished poem:—

> Thus, as the blemish which cosmetic art,
> Repels from one, invades another part,
> My roving fancy found another vent,
> The object changed, but not the sentiment!

And my object, on this occasion, was to endeavour to travel from Europe to India, without undergoing the usual wearisome interval on shipboard. Some people may like the sea; personally I detest it, not only because of its unbearable monotony, but by reason of the enforced, and daily, association with uninteresting people, which a voyage on any large liner entails. A bore is bad enough on land, but at sea, where there is no escape, his presence becomes a question of actual homicide or self-destruction. Again, I have often been exasperated,

beyond endurance, by the organizers of so-called "amusements" on a floating hotel, and yet, like my fellow-passengers, have meekly submitted to the annoyance because, forsooth, it is "the custom," though why a man, having paid his just fare, should be coerced into joining in dreary entertainments from which his very soul recoils, has yet to be explained.

But I have other reasons for disliking the much overrated ocean. Only recently, a clever and charming lady facetiously remarked: "I suppose you went to all these places by land, because you were afraid of shipwreck?" and, in this instance the true word was (to a certain extent) spoken in jest. For, although my long *terra firma* expeditions have occasionally entailed perilous intervals afloat and have not been carried out solely with regard to my personal safety, I must frankly own that I never feel really comfortable on board a ship, from the time of sailing, until I leave her at my destination. It was not always so; but, in this case, I have lived and learnt, and now realize that the most stupendous vessel ever launched on the Clyde can, under certain conditions, be rendered as helpless and unmanageable, in five minutes, as a wisp of straw in a whirlpool. Most landsmen, (and especially women), rely on the size of the vessel they embark upon; whereas this has nothing whatever to do with its safety. The mere sight of a restaurant on board, with shaded lights, a string band, and people in evening dress, gives them a sense of security,

though, a few feet away, be the outer darkness and a raging sea. But let the shaft or propeller break, (as in the case of the "Deutchsland") in dirty weather, and where are they? The very immensity of that great trunk of metal, crashing from side to side in its narrow prison, becomes a source of imminent peril; and should anything serious occur, our friends in the "restaurant" would be far better off, if they only knew it, in that grimy little barque they passed, and pitied, a few hours before—a tiny cockboat, battened down perhaps, with decks awash, but as tight and sound as a new drum. For man can wrestle on the deep, with heavy machinery, up to a certain point, beyond which, freed from restraint by wind and waves, it becomes a cruel and dangerous tyrant. Under these circumstances, ignorance is certainly bliss, as witness the following anecdote. I was returning from New York, after my first unsuccessful attempt to reach Paris by land, on the finest transatlantic liner then afloat. She was commanded by an old friend, with whom I had often sailed in Far Eastern waters. One night, in mid-ocean, it was blowing a hurricane, and our ungainly leviathan was rolling and wallowing like a sick porpoise in a terrific sea. I was smoking, after dinner, with the skipper, in his room on the bridge, and we had just agreed that, in such weather, a broken shaft, of such colossal dimensions as the one we carried, might easily cause an appalling catastrophe. "Well," I remarked, "with all due respect

for your splendid command, I would sooner be lying hove-to in that snug little whaler which has just brought me down from the Arctic!" B——'s eyes twinkled. "Between you and me, so would I," he whispered, with a wink; "but you needn't tell 'em so downstairs!"

I had almost made up my mind to start off to India by land, viâ Russia, Central Asia, and Afghanistan, when I made the acquaintance, in Paris, of a very interesting Frenchman, the Marquis de Morès, who was meditating a trip to Timbuctoo, at that time a difficult and perilous undertaking. De Morès was an extraordinarily handsome man, of about five-and-thirty, who had led an adventurous life, not only in the wilds of Western America, but also in France, where he had once suffered imprisonment for attempting to overthrow the Republican Government in favour of a monarchy. But African travel never attracted me, and I also had some doubts as to whether the Marquis's impulsive, reckless nature might not cause trouble amongst hostile and fanatical tribes. My fears were unfortunately well founded, for, a few years later, the poor fellow was assassinated by Tuaregs, while on a journey from Tunis to Ghadamés, in the Sahara Desert—chiefly because he travelled with a large sum of money, and had foolishly announced the fact on his departure from Algeria. I saw, at one time, a good deal of De Morès, who was a delightful companion, and had only one fault, his implacable hatred of England—

though not of the English, for he had many friends in this country, and delighted in our sports and customs. This unfortunate prejudice probably cost my friend his life, for, on his last and fatal journey, he had conceived the suicidal project of penetrating to the Soudan, and providing the Madhi with money to repel the British troops. Probably, therefore, his untimely end was only hastened by a few months. De Morès ultimately gave up the Timbuctoo scheme, and I set out alone for the Caucasus, intending to cross the Caspian Sea and reach Calcutta viâ Bokhàra and Cabul. But the Russian authorities at Tiflis would not hear of this interesting itinerary, and I was compelled to change it to one viâ Persia and Kelát. This, by the way, was the first and last occasion upon which I did any work for our Intelligence Department, and, since my brief association therewith, I have ceased to wonder that foreign countries are invariably better supplied with unofficial, (but often valuable), information than England.

During my land journey to India[1] I passed a few pleasant days in Persia, (notably with Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, then our minister in Teherán), and many extremely uncomfortable weeks in the deserts of Baluchistán, across which I rode on camels to Kelát, often wondering what devil's whisper had ever prompted me to visit such a sterile, uninterest-

[1] See *A Ride to India*, by the author. Chapman and Hall, London, 1891.

ing country. On reaching the capital, Kelát, however, I derived a good deal of amusement, and some information, from the ruler of Baluchistán, as cruel and abandoned an old scoundrel as ever disgraced a throne, who, before he was deposed by the Indian Government, had slain thousands of innocent subjects to gratify his passions and cupidity. But His Highness received me most graciously in his mud palace, and I thoroughly enjoyed the interview, for, although a tyrant and murderer, he was a humorous old man, not unlike Fagin the Jew in *Oliver Twist*.

The Khan, as I had come direct from Russia, declined to believe that I was an Englishman, and, while disparaging my own countrymen, showed me, with great delight, a magnificent emerald he had just received from the Tsar. The court chamberlain was as great a character, in his way, as his august master, and spent most of his time in my tent, outside the city walls. The old fellow could speak, and even write, a few words of English, as I found on the morning of departure, when I awoke to find that a basket of musty dates had been laid beside my couch, with a dirty scrap of paper. On the latter was scrawled in pencil: "*Exchange is no robbery*," and I then discovered that a revolver, which my old friend had much admired, had been taken from under my pillow during the night. But I did not grudge the gift, and was sincerely sorry to hear, shortly afterwards, that the unfortunate recipient

had for some trivial offence been put to death "by order of the Khan."

I have never cared much for India, and the few weeks I spent there, on this occasion, inspired me with no desire to revisit the country. Delhi, Agra, and other cities may be very picturesque and interesting, but they have now become so vulgarized by crowds of, what may almost be called, cheap trippers, that the Oriental charm and novelty which once made them so attractive have practically disappeared. And it is the same with the Holy Land, to which I made a yachting trip with my friend Cecil Leigh, in his yacht the "White Heather," shortly after returning to England. Jerusalem is surely a spot which should be approached with reverence, to say nothing of adjacent places rendered beautiful, not only by natural surroundings, but by their association with sacred events in the history of Christianity. Judge, therefore, of my disgust when, after watching a glorious sunset from the Mount of Olives, we sat down to dinner at the hotel, with a party of "personally conducted" tourists, and it was publicly proclaimed by their leader that, on the following day at noon, sandwiches and bottled ale would be served outside the "'Oly Sepulchre!" And, added the man, with a sly wink, "Perhaps a drop of 'Jameson' for those who feel faint!" I could not look at the wretch, in that holy city, without recalling an inebriated old hag I once saw in the Strand, who,

when she was not collecting coppers, was assuring dismayed foot-passengers that she would lovingly greet them again "in the sweet by and by—on that beautiful shore!"

The "White Heather" returned home by way of Corfu (whence we landed on the Albanian coast for some poor shooting) and Gibraltar, where I left the yacht to visit an old friend then quartered on the Rock. And here I met with a ridiculous, though, at the time, very unpleasant, adventure, which shows the imprudence of sleeping away from home in dress-clothes, without a change for the morning.

My friend was married, and did not live in barracks, but occupied a pretty villa at one end of the town, my hotel being a couple of miles away at the other extremity, while between them lay the principal parade-ground. On the evening in question, after dinner, a gale arose, accompanied by such torrents of rain that, no cab being procurable, my host insisted upon my staying the night. I could easily, he said, return early the next morning before any one was about.

But it so happened that a popular Highland regiment was leaving Gibraltar the next day, and the farewell ceremony was to take place on the parade-ground in the presence of the Governor, the garrison, and *élite* of the place at ten o'clock a.m. And, as ill-luck would have it, it was nearly that hour before I awoke, for my host, in the bustle of getting off to parade, had forgotten all about me, while his wife

had gone out, without even being aware that I had slept in the house. It happened to be a native fête day; a glorious morning with blazing sunshine, the narrow streets crowded with people dressed in their best, and gay with the sound of military bands and church bells, and through all this must I drive, a dishevelled, sable-clad pariah, all the way to the hotel. I could only partially conceal myself, for the Gibraltar cab is an open *fiacre*, provided with a kind of canopy, with blinds which can be lowered all round in case of wind or rain, but under which my legs and a pair of pumps were clearly visible as we progressed down the main thoroughfare, very slowly on account of the crowd. I noticed, through a chink in the oilcloth, that many people uncovered as I passed, for an epidemic was raging in the town, and patients were frequently conveyed to hospital in these hired vehicles! Presently the crowd grew denser, our progress slower, and I shrank back on the seat, with a view to further concealment, when the cab halted with a jerk, and a loud altercation followed between its driver and some person in authority. Suddenly my refuge was violently torn asunder to disclose, not only the irate countenance of a British "Tommy," but the appalling fact that the cabman, misunderstanding my directions, had driven me plump into the reserved enclosure of the parade-ground! There, within thirty yards of me, stood the Governor and a number of fashionably attired guests, while His Excellency, with whom I had dined

shortly before, was glancing in my direction and evidently questioning an aide-de-camp as to the cause of the disturbance.

I, fortunately, had some money on me, and my friend, the "Tommy," seeing the glint of gold, saved the awful situation, which had been caused by the fact that I had no invitation card. With admirable presence of mind, however, this soldier of the Queen murmured the talismanic words, "Mistake; Fever." The noisy crowd fell back as if by magic, and I made a rapid and almost triumphant exit from that very warm corner, luckily before an approaching A.D.C., (whom I knew well), could reach it. And, strange to relate, not even my host of the previous night ever heard of the occurrence; nor did I think it necessary to enlighten him.

My second book on this Indian journey was written partly in London, but chiefly in Paris, where I now occupied an apartment near the Champs Elysées, and passed a good deal of my time. But I crossed the Channel, either way, almost every week, and it was on one of these trips that I chanced to make the acquaintance of one of the most remarkable men I have ever met, although, at the time of our meeting, he struck me as being a pleasant, but very ordinary, member of society. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that, in his own profession (if it may so be called), Count Lavine[1] was

[1] Only one letter of the real name is altered.

the cleverest man in Europe, if not in creation. At any rate, that is the opinion of the Metropolitan Police, who, in common with their colleagues in every continental capital, are extremely well acquainted with the gentleman in question. And the strangest part of the whole affair is that the Count was a distant connection of the Russian Imperial Family, and, when I met him, was on his way to Scotland to shoot with Lord ——. A month later he returned to London, where I frequently saw him, especially at a certain club, previously referred to in these memoirs, where he gained some notoriety by his reckless play and lavish hospitality. Where the money came from, no one knew, but the open-handed Russian always settled, so no one particularly wanted to.

I have since had a varied and extensive experience of prisons and criminals in all parts of the world, but I think Nikolai Lavine's case was the most interesting and remarkable one I have ever come across; and, as this King of Sharpers will figure again more than once in this narrative, I may as well give a brief sketch of his chequered career, up to the time we met, and after. I may add that I have obtained these particulars from the Russian secret police, with whom I was at one period of my life brought into constant communication, and also from private sources.

Nikolai Lavine began life as a lieutenant in the Garde de Corps, or Russian Life Guards, and, as

I have already said, had Imperial connections. At this time very wealthy, his reckless mode of life was the talk of Petersburg. He gave dinners costing £1000, and this reckless extravagance was practised in numerous ways, with the result that his immense fortune decreased with fatal rapidity. Within three years after his accession to the family estates, Lavine found himself a ruined man, and the former were sold to cover the debts which he had contracted in all directions. Finding that there were insufficient funds left to pay his debts of honour, Lavine threw up his commission, went abroad, and finally drifted to Paris. Here he soon got into touch with wealthy men, and acquired a practical knowledge of business, being greatly assisted by the fact that he could speak English, French, German, Italian, Polish, and even Czech with fluency.

So well did this clever Russian prosper on the Bourse and at cards, that he was soon able to rent a fine apartment on the Boulevard des Italiens—one Paris firm furnishing this at a cost of over £1000 without receiving or even asking for a cent in cash! The money required to pay for immediate necessities was easily earned by Lavine's queer methods at cards, and by loans obtained from his many wealthy and aristocratic friends. The Count was also unusually handsome and attractive, and was an expert in the art of extorting money from wealthy women in society. He would first fascinate, then gravely compromise them, threatening exposure unless he

received a heavy sum to keep silence. Men, too, lent him money freely, for he had a wonderful knack of inspiring confidence in his honour, integrity, and imaginary wealth.

But this accomplished adventurer, beginning to tire of the exploitation of private individuals, offered his services as secret agent to the Russian Government, averring that, by means of his social and political acquaintances, he could supply the Russian Ministry of War with valuable information on French military subjects. The Russian Ambassador in Paris was favourably impressed, and knowing that the applicant moved in high circles, entrusted him with delicate matters of *espionage*. Lavine's letters were brilliantly written, and contained so much known to be accurate, that he was liberally paid, and his information regarded as very important. It was only several years later, that the highly coloured reports were found to be purely imaginary! Nevertheless, Lavine also spied for Germany, Austria, and Spain; and although in the pay of four European Governments, this extraordinary man could still find time to join a Nihilist association in Paris, the leaders of which had not the slightest conception of their comrade's official or social connections; and this although a serious plot to assassinate the late Tsar was traced to the Parisian group of which Lavine was the most active member.

But vice seldom flourishes for ever, and the Count gradually began to find Paris an inconvenient place

of residence. Ugly stories were about, and, to avoid exposure, Lavine quietly left France, and proceeded to Berlin, where he lived much the same life as he had done in Paris. After a while he went on to Vienna, from Vienna to Rome, and Rome to Madrid, and Copenhagen. At the latter place he assumed the French title of Toulouse de Lautrec, and, after a short and profitable stay, visited the Balkans, while there was a grave crisis in Bulgaria. Prince Ferdinand had then failed to realize the expectations of his party, and the Count actually conceived the idea of ousting the ruler of Bulgaria and himself ascending the throne!—a proceeding which savours, in its romantic extravagance, of a novel by Anthony Hope.

Lavine now set to work to attain his end, with all the skill and cunning acquired in previous intrigues. His transactions with various governments had secured him letters from important personages, and he freely utilized these to prove to prominent Bulgarians that he had obtained the esteem and confidence of the principal statesmen of Europe, and that consequently he was quite a suitable candidate for their throne! He even hoodwinked Stambuloff, the cleverest politician in the Balkans, who was actually supporting the claims of the arch-swindler, when something occurred to put an effective stopper on the latter's ambitious programme. Lavine had visited Constantinople to interview the Sultan, and, while there, he was recognized in a *café* by a Russian police agent, holding a warrant for his

arrest. A few weeks later, Lavine was deported to Siberia, in a criminal gang. This must have been a terrible ordeal for one who had lived a life of spurious fame, and shone in the *salons* of Parisian society, but it did not last long. For, with characteristic resource and ingenuity, the convict contrived to escape from the mines, and reach Tomsk, a large town in Central Siberia. Here, with his usual impudence, he set up as a man of wealth, and accomplished a gigantic fraud, connected with the sale of grain. But chance led to his detection; and he was rearrested and sent back to the mines, only to escape a second time to Vladivostok, where he boarded an English ship bound for Shanghai, and eventually reached San Francisco. Here the ex-convict arrived shortly before the war with Spain, and, ever in search of new experiences, he shipped to Cuba and fought as a volunteer on the American side.

Lavine fought for the pleasure of fighting, and not from any espousal of the American cause, for, as a matter of fact, his sympathies were rather with Spain than the United States. But there was no money to be made, either by fair or foul means, in Cuba, and, after the war, Lavine, being utterly destitute, resorted to all sorts of devices to keep his head above water. In Chicago, he was in turn a waiter, billiard-marker, and street-car conductor, but gradually he worked his way up into a New York commercial house, where his knowledge of languages earned him a good salary as a clerk.

But an irresistible longing to return to Europe, and the scenes of former triumphs, soon rendered Lavine weary of an honest and respectable life, and, one day, he suddenly embarked for England, whence another swindling tour was made throughout the Continent, under varying conditions, one day living in luxury, the next one confined in a prison cell. I do not suppose there is a capital in Europe, where this arch-impostor has not been incarcerated, at some period or other, for frauds of various kinds. Even at the moment of writing, I read that he has, only last week, (for perhaps the fiftieth time), been arrested and tried for obtaining money under false pretences. But the Count will reappear on two occasions, during the course of this narrative, and I shall, therefore, defer a further account of his iniquitous career until we meet him again.

. . . . . .

"Her Excellency Madame de Novikoff would like to make your acquaintance. Call upon her at Claridge's Hotel." So ran a note, handed to me one bright May morning, from a friend then attached to the Russian Embassy in London. Who was "Madame de Novikoff"? The name conveyed nothing to me, for in those days I took no interest in either home, or foreign, politics. And so, that afternoon, I sauntered carelessly round to Brook Street, little dreaming that I was about to visit a lady who had held her own in international controversies

with the greatest British statesman of his day, and whose diplomacy and tact had even once averted a disastrous collision between England and Russia. Of "O. K."[1] I had, of course, heard and read in the newspapers, but how many people were acquainted with the real name of, say, the late gifted authoress, "Ouida"?

Claridge's Hotel was then a contrast, with its low rooms and narrow passages, to the gorgeous edifice of to-day, although it has always enjoyed the almost exclusive patronage of crowned heads and distinguished people. I was shown into a business-like apartment, where a large bureau, littered with documents and papers, and an uncompromising sofa and chairs, replaced the customary chintz couches, and flowers, photographs and knick-knacks which usually adorn the apartments of the fair sex. And I was received with such simplicity of speech and manner, that I could scarcely believe my charming hostess, when she introduced herself as the great "O. K.," a pseudonym then regarded with suspicion, not to say dislike, by most English people: but only by those, I may add, who had never met the owner. For personal charm is only one of Madame de Novikoff's many, and varied, attributes, also the gift of putting people at their ease, so that in ten minutes we were talking like old acquaintances, over a *samovar*, anent the subject which had brought me

[1] The initials of her maiden name, "Olga Kiréef," are used by Madame de Novikoff as a *nom de plume*.

there. And it was nearing the dinner-hour before I reluctantly took my leave of this kind and gracious lady, who had not only added one to her already long list of friends and admirers, but who had also given me a new object in life. For my connection with the Siberian Exile Question, which has been the one important work of my life, entailing many thousand miles of arduous and sometimes perilous travel, had its origin in that little sunless sitting-room, with its huge desk and sombre furniture, at Claridge's Hotel, in Brook Street!

XII

SOME SIBERIAN PRISONS — LAVINE AGAIN — THE LATE POET-LAUREATE — MONTE CARLO AS IT WAS

THE Trans-Siberian Railway has robbed the Tsar's great land of exile of most of its hardships, for prisoners now travel in comfortable cars, where they formerly toiled wearily along that straight, endless road, tormented in summer by a blazing sun and swarms of mosquitoes, or—towards the close of the transport season—splashing through half-frozen mire, drenched and chilled to the bone by the searching gales of a Siberian autumn. This was the mode of progress when, in '87, I came overland from China to France, and, during that journey through Siberia, not a day passed that we did not meet prison gangs bound for Irkutsk, thence to be drafted to the adjacent gold and silver mines, or to some remote hell of cold and hunger within the Arctic Circle.[1] My work, descriptive of the journey, contained several references to criminal convicts I had met on the road—merely superficial notes, for in those days Russian prisons were closed to me. I saw enough, however, outside them to convince me that the

[1] The latter only applies to *political* exiles.

harrowing tales which I had read in England, of cruelty and persecution, were absurdly exaggerated. The good old English legend of men rotting to death in quicksilver mines was the first to explode, seeing that the mineral in question does not even exist in Siberia. And every day brought fresh proofs that, in England, at any rate, Siberia as a penal centre had been greatly maligned. Nevertheless, about this time an American traveller, Mr. George Kennan, was arousing the indignation of Europe by his lurid descriptions of Siberian prison life in the *Century Magazine*. According to this writer, exiles of both sexes were systematically and grossly maltreated, the gaols and *étapes* were dens of immorality, filth, and disease, and the entire system of deportation was a disgrace to humanity. And there was no one to question these statements, for in those days Englishmen were almost as rare in Siberia as nuggets in a paving-stone.

But Madame de Novikoff, herself a Russian prison directress, having read in *Pekin to Calais* my impressions (which were diametrically opposed to those of Mr. Kennan) on the subject, resolved, if possible, to send me as an unbiased witness to Siberia, to draw up a plain and truthful report on the actual situation.[1] This scheme first emanated

[1] "The exiles do not have such a bad time of it as we in England are led to believe. I met many, of all sorts and conditions, but from none did I hear the harrowing tales of cruelty and oppression that Englishmen always connect with the name of Siberia."—*Pekin to Calais by Land*, pp. 404 *et seq.*

from very high quarters in St. Petersburg and Copenhagen, and I need not, therefore, say how cheerfully I accepted the mission, chiefly from pure love of adventure, for, notwithstanding sarcastic innuendoes which have appeared from time to time in the press, I did not receive one penny for my services beyond the modest sum required for travelling expenses. Nevertheless, I doubt if any other traveller has ever been so universally discredited, and even reviled, as myself, when I returned with a favourable account of what I had seen. Not a newspaper in England, to say nothing of America, would credit my assertion that Russian prisons were humanely conducted, and were even preferable, from the prisoners' point of view, and by reason of their laxity of discipline, to those of her late Majesty Queen Victoria. But old superstitions die hard; and the very name of Siberia had always been suggestive to the Anglo-Saxon mind of pain and persecution, with a leavening of torture and the knout. The British public had, for its own cryptic reasons, decreed that the place was a hell upon earth, and as such, from the time of the Polish insurrection up to Mr. Kennan's scathing denunciation, it was universally regarded.

I will not enter into details, which have already been published, regarding this, my first inspection of the prisons of Siberia, which was only a pleasure trip compared to the more extended investigations which followed. Suffice it to say that I was pro-

vided with an Imperial *ukase* so powerful and far-reaching that it enabled me, without notice, to enter, and closely examine, any place of confinement, at any hour of the day or night, throughout the Russian Empire. To give an instance: I once called upon the governor of the largest prison in Petersburg at two o'clock in the morning, and although the great man could scarcely conceal his annoyance at being aroused at that unusual hour, he dared not disobey my "Open, Sesame," but, (somewhat sullenly), accompanied me through every ward in the huge building, which, that night, contained something like two thousand inmates. It was broad daylight before I returned to my hotel.

My next visit was to the great forwarding prison at Moscow, a large brick building in a dreary suburb, where exiles are placed prior to being dispatched on their long journey. The varied nationalities of both sexes which I found collected here would have furnished material for an ethnological work—Russians, Poles, Finns, Tartars, Georgians, Circassians, and goodness knows how many more, with a sprinkling of the semi-German element from Courland, but only one foreigner, an Austrian. Both sexes dwelt apart, in light and spacious halls, each containing about fifty or sixty inmates. The men wore linen shirt and trousers, a flat cloth cap, and drab frieze overcoat (the exile's summer garb); the women, roughly made clothes of similar texture.

Some of the former had partly shaven heads, and wore leg-irons, which, apparently, did not preclude them from smoking and playing cards. There was none of the silence and restraint I have invariably found in English prisons; no wooden-faced warders, or cowering wretches ordered to turn to the wall on my approach. Indeed, in Moscow, there were no restrictions whatever as to loud conversation or freedom of manner, and though some of these men, and many of the women, were thoughtful and subdued—a few even in tears—the general impression was certainly not mournful or even dispiriting. One female ward I saw, where a number of children had been permitted to accompany their mothers into exile, was more like a cheerful nursery than a place of captivity.

The private cells, reserved for the better class of prisoners on remand, occupied another part of the building, and here I met with a surprise which must almost have equalled that of Mr. Pickwick, when he suddenly encountered Alfred Jingle in the Old Fleet prison. "You will see plenty of this kind of thing where you are going," said the Governor as we traversed some more crowded *kameras*.[1] "But I have something really interesting to show you in the solitary cells."

We entered a gallery reserved for "politicals," and prisoners on remand, and bright with steel and whitewash, and my guide paused before a low door-

[1] The public cells in a Russian prison.

way, as the gaoler turned a key, and the mass of iron swung slowly back on its hinges. A man who was seated, writing at a table, slowly turned towards us. At first his face was blurred by a dense mist of cigarette smoke, and a fair beard effectually disguised the wearer, until the latter's speech betrayed him.

"Bon jour, mon Colonel!" The soft, pleasant voice carried me back, in a flash, from that gloomy gaol to sunlit Piccadilly in the season, and I stared in amazement, until aroused by the Governor's curt greeting.

"I have brought you a visitor, Lavine," he said. "Here is an Englishman to see you."

Lavine's face fell, but only for an instant. The next moment he had rushed forward and seized both my hands, while the Governor stood aghast at my apparent friendship with such a notorious malefactor.

"My dear Harry! Who on earth would have dreamt of seeing *you* here?" I suppressed the obvious retort. "Alas! Debt, my old friend—the old story—debt has landed me in this infernal hole! Do you remember our poor friend G—— being taken to Holloway? We are now brethren in distress!" and Lavine laughed heartily at the joke. But the mirth was hollow, and there were little lines about the speaker's eyes and mouth that told of incessant unrest and anxiety. Nevertheless the man had retained all his old *sang-froid* and playfully drew my attention to the magic name of "Poole"

inside a well-worn serge jacket, remarking on its in congruity within bolts and bars. "I shall soon b out," said this extraordinary being, when we parted "After all, it is only for a miserable jeweller's bill!' Which was, indeed, partly true, for this accomplishe crook had recently abstracted diamonds, to the valu of several thousand roubles, from a shop in Kieff Lavine shortly afterwards received a term of fiv years' penal servitude in Siberia, (whence, as th reader is already aware, he managed to escape), an I now hoped to have seen the last of this undesirabl acquaintance, but we were fated to meet again.

I accompanied a gang of about a hundred exile on their journey from Moscow to Tomsk, beyon which city I did not proceed, for winter had already shown its teeth with a raging blizzard, and the roads were in a frightful state. Most of this voyage was made in a steamer, which towed a prison barge along the Irtysh and Obi rivers. Thus I was able to associate daily with the convicts, to whom I had free access at all times, a fact which afforded me every opportunity of studying their condition of life. I was away from England about four months, and returned with a favourable account of almost everything I had seen, which, however, to my surprise, met with almost universal incredulity. While some newspapers darkly hinted at monetary transactions with the Russian Government, others openly stated that I had been hoodwinked, and that the prisons had been prepared for me, which would,

of course, have been impossible, seeing that I visited the famous Tomsk establishment, (which, according to Mr. Kennan, could only have been made habitable after months of labour), within three weeks of the day when I called on Madame de Novikoff at Claridge's Hotel!

And not only the Press, but nearly every one I met in social life, absolutely refused to hear a word in favour of the Siberian exile system. They had been brought up from childhood to regard it as a foul blot on humanity, they had seen it so described and depicted in novels and on the stage, and as such it must therefore remain. Mr. George Kennan then took up the cudgels, and averred, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, that my favourable description of the Tomsk forwarding prison was owing to the fact that I had mistaken the town gaol for the one painted in such lurid colours by the American journalist. But, having visited both the aforesaid establishments, I soon undeceived him. Nevertheless, this controversy continued, hammer and tongs, for so long in the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, that, at last, I don't know who must have been the most weary of the correspondence—the readers of the journal, Mr. Kennan, or myself! My one grain of consolation lay in the fact that, although the Press and public were against me, my statements were accepted by men of such literary eminence and knowledge of the world as Sir John Robinson of the *Daily News*, Mr. Edmund Yates of the *World*, and Mr. W. T. Stead.

I could therefore afford to endure, with some complacency, the sneers and attacks of those whose information was based chiefly on facts derived from sensational novels and the yellow press. "Let them rave, 'Boreas'!" once said Yates. (This was his own blending of my surname with the "God of the Winds.") "They will find out the truth some day!" Mr. Stead's remarks were, perhaps, not so encouraging, at any rate on our first acquaintance. Armed with an introduction from Madame de Novikoff, I called upon him one morning at his office in Arundel Street, and found him busily writing, and up to the eyes in work. "Sit down," said he, without looking round, as I was announced, and the pen scratched hurriedly on for quite a minute. Then an office chair whirled round with a bang, and the keen, clever countenance of the reviewer of reviews confronted me. His voice had a short, sharp, "don't-waste-my-time" sort of manner, which did not inspire much confidence.

"So you are de Windt—eh? Just back from Siberia. Now tell me, have you ever been in gaol yourself? I mean locked up?" I replied that I had never, as yet, enjoyed that interesting privilege.

"Humph! Then what on earth can *you* know about prisons?"

Rather disconcerting this, but I soon discovered that the great editor's bark was worse than his bite, and the kindly notices of my work and writings which afterwards appeared from his pen, soon effaced

the memory of that first, but rather unsatisfactory, meeting. And here I may add that, one day in London, while at the house of one of his relatives, Mrs. L——, I met Winston Churchill, then a mere lad, who quietly drew me aside after lunch and questioned me as to my doings in Siberia. And I was astounded to discover that this youthful Etonian knew almost as much about the country, theoretically, as I did, and had so carefully studied the subject, that his views thereon were as lucid and accurate as those of most Englishmen I met at that time were the reverse. And yet, I question if the present head of the Board of Trade was then more than sixteen years of age.

But if I possessed these few good friends, I also had some all-powerful enemies, or perhaps I should rather call them dissentients, one of whom was no less than the Poet-Laureate himself. A few weeks after my return, I was staying with some very dear friends at Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, and Lord Tennyson having expressed a wish to hear about Siberia, my hostess took me to lunch at Farringford—a beautiful old place embowered in stately oak and chestnut trees, smooth, shady lawns, and beds of brilliant flowers. We found the poet pacing up and down a kind of conservatory, which, however, contained nothing but some roughly painted pieces of canvas, (apparently stage scenery), propped against the wall. And never shall I forget the impression made on me by that rugged, pictur-

esque figure, with its grave, handsome features and keen, expressive eyes, which one moment could twinkle with humour, and yet the next be almost terrible in their wrath. There was a curious ring, or cadence, in Lord Tennyson's voice which, with his quaint north-country accent, I have never forgotten, as we three paced up and down the long, bare building, during the few minutes that preceded lunch.

The immortal creator of *Maud* spoke little, as he puffed thoughtfully at a well-worn briar pipe, while listening to Mrs. S. C——'s remarks on ordinary subjects, but suddenly he paused, and wheeled quickly round to face me.

"And where is it you have come from?" he asked, surveying me with that searching glance.

"I have just arrived from Siberia," I replied, and, having been told that the subject would be of interest, was about to give a brief account of the journey, when loudly interrupted.

"Arrived from hell you mean!" thundered Lord Tennyson, his eyes suddenly ablaze with anger and indignation.

A rather awkward silence ensued, as the speaker slowly resumed his walk, and my hostess and I meekly followed suit, one on either side. Then, to my intense relief, lunch was announced. But although our distinguished host soon recovered his good humour, and I was afterwards charmed and delighted, (as who was not?) by his geniality and kindness, the subject of Siberia was never again

mentioned at Farringford. And I was not sorry for it.

A few months later my book on the Siberian Exile System appeared[1] and met with almost universal condemnation in England, my critics being especially severe on the fact that the preface was signed by Madame de Novikoff; though why a lady, officially connected with the Russian penal administration, should not have expressed her approval of my investigations, I could never understand. And when it became known that I had left for Petersburg to present a copy of the work to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia, (then H.I.H. the Tsarévitch) all doubt was removed, and more than one English paper openly stated that I had been bribed to "whitewash," (that was the term used) the prisons of Siberia![2]

I wrote most of this book at Saint Raphaël, a quiet, old-fashioned little place, between Toulon and Nice on the French Riviera. But I frequently visited Monte Carlo, which was then the resort of refined and agreeable people, and one could enter the rooms without being pushed and jostled by an ill-dressed crowd, and stifled by an atmosphere of cheap scent and perspiring humanity. How the place is changed, only those who knew it in the early nineties can realize, for life was then indeed worth

[1] *Siberia as it is.* Chapman and Hall, London, 1891.

[2] I may add that H.M. the Emperor expressed himself as pleased with the work.

living in the "Devil's Garden." *Siberia as it is* was dedicated to one of my kindest, and most sympathetic, friends, the Princesse de Monaco, and I sometimes dined at the pretty little palace, overlooking the dazzling white town and blue harbour, which always reminds me of a scene in comic opera. But Monte Carlo has changed almost beyond recognition, and Ciro's is about the only establishment in the place that remains much the same, although I preferred his small, but cosy, restaurant of old, to the gilt and garish palace of to-day. Many a time have I sat there until the small hours, with the most distinguished exponents that London could produce of art, literature, and the drama, but who here seemed to have but one thought and object in life—to get the best of "Mr. White." Then there was the pigeon-shooting division: Harry Roberts, Reggie Heygate, Fitzroy Erskine, Jack Hayley, "Bimbash" Stuart, the Queen's Messenger, and a host of others, of whom the first named alone seems to possess the secret of perennial youth and a fatal trigger. Poor Stuart, of satanic appearance, I had known years before, as a beardless subaltern in Egypt, and his one great fad—an implacable hatred of Americans, (confined to the male sex)—seemed only to have increased with the lapse of time. I recollect one night, at Ciro's, a garrulous gentleman from New York was relating his experiences in the Cuban War, while "Bimbash" sat smoking a cigarette in contemptuous silence.

"Yes, *sir!*" said the American; "that was one of the closest calls I ever had. You talk about the Crimea—why, before Santiago shells and bullets were flying about——"

"Ah! and so were you, I expect," broke in Stuart, with a quiet, but devilish, smile; but the satire was quite lost upon the voluble Yankee.

I think "Bimbash" was about the coolest hand I have ever known, (and I have met some) under any circumstances, and the sensation of fear was probably unknown to him—either when gambling with death in tight places, or staking his last hundred pounds on the green cloth. During his last, and fatal, illness a consultation was called, at which three famous London physicians were present, and the patient, barely conscious, half opened his eyes and, seeing the doctors standing round his bedside, indicated them, one by one, with a feeble forefinger: "One—two—three," he whispered; then, closing his eyes again: "Well, if that don't settle me, nothing will!"

Another familiar figure at Monte Carlo, at this time, was the late Sam Lewis, around whom people used to crowd every evening, to watch his sensational play in maximums. Sam's profession was scarcely a creditable one, but a kinder-hearted soul never breathed, nor one who, notwithstanding his humble origin and great wealth, was ever less ashamed of the one and proud of the other. And, although Lew[illegible] had a heart of flint where aristocratic, impecuni[illegible] idlers were concerned, I do not believe a real ca[illegible]

distress ever appealed to him in vain. The Cork Street financier hated snobbery of any kind, but Madame, and the ladies of his *entourage*, by no means shared his dislike of display and ostentation. I remember once dining with Lewis and his wife at the Hôtel Ritz, in Paris, to meet a large party, including a distinguished Frenchman and his wife, and the entertainment, (under the eagle eye of Mrs. Lewis), was conducted with such pomp and ceremony that, during the meal, her overawed husband scarcely uttered a word. But, after dinner, we adjourned to palatial apartments upstairs, and, while coffee was being served, our host suddenly fell back into a gorgeously upholstered "Empire" arm-chair, till only a large bald head, and two diminutive legs thrust out in front were visible, and was so loudly convulsed with merriment thereat, that every one in the room looked round in startled surprise. "Just look 'ere, 'Arry!" gasped the little man, shuddering with laughter, and quite unconscious of Mrs. Lewis's withering glances; "Just look 'ere! I might be in a bloomin' 'ip-bath!"

XIII

MY PERSIAN "PICK-ME-UP"—A LOST GENIUS—RAVACHOL'S "CAFÉ"

DURING my overland journey to India, I happened, by chance, to come across a mysterious drug, much prized by the natives on account of its marvellous properties as a mental and physical restorative. Having tried the remedy, and derived much benefit therefrom, I formed, on my return to London, a small syndicate of friends, and, under medical supervision, we added certain ingredients to the elixir, and brought it out as a patent medicine—in other words, as a "pick-me-up." But the next thing was to find a name, for the stuff had an unpronounceable one in its native land. One day, however, while in a chemist's shop, I chanced to see the word "Zingib," in gold letters on a green china jar, and its brevity and Oriental sound induced me to adopt it for my discovery, merely substituting a "t" for the final letter. For many months "Zingit" had a great sale, (and can even now be purchased in the West End); but, notwithstanding its popularity, I was one day rather surprised to hear that it had been prescribed by the faculty, knowing that, as a rule, En[illegible]

physicians do not advocate the use of "pick-me-ups." "That stuff you found must be really A1," said a friend one day; "why even the great Sir Andrew Squills orders it for his patients," and he produced his prescription, which quickly showed how the error had arisen in this, and many other, cases. That excellent, but homely, remedy ginger appears in a very large percentage of prescriptions, and as the word is written "Zingib," (often hastily and indistinctly), our syndicate had obtained a free and extensive advertisement—without knowing it, and for nothing!

We manufactured the "Persian Pick-me-up" at a place on Snow Hill, where our principal compounder was an excellent man and experienced chemist, but one who had unfortunately become crazy on the subject of cheap advertisement. Having failed to persuade me to order a pair of boots with a metal reservoir let into the heels, so contrived as to exude the word "Zingit" in black letters on the pavement he appeared one morning with, apparently, a small seal in his hand. "Well, anyhow, there's nothing *infra dig.* about this," he cried triumphantly, "and it's my own invention, too! Very simple, you see only a rubber pad moistened with indian ink. Now all you've got to do is to carry this in your pocket, and when you call on your friends, just wait till they are not looking, and then dab it down on the carpet, piano-cover, or whatnot, so that they can see it when you have gone, and I am sure the joke will be

taken in good part. At any rate, it will GET US TALKED ABOUT!" which, indeed, under the circumstances, was probably true!

My brief association with the "Zingit" Company afforded me some opportunity of studying the weaknesses of human nature, and of realizing that even the most strait-laced people will sometimes resort to the meanest deception, in order to indulge a secret weakness. "Zingit" was, (or rather is), a very powerful stimulant, and cases containing a dozen quarts were occasionally dispatched to customers (of both sexes) in the country, who, for an obvious reason, requested that the company's label should not appear on the outside of the package. One day, when lunching with friends in London, I met a country squire, a noted temperance advocate, who aggressively proclaimed that he never touched anything but water, and sincerely pitied those who could not eschew stimulants in any shape or form. The gentleman in question was, of course, unaware that I had anything to do with "Zingit," a large case of which had been consigned to his address, (without label), only three days before.

It was about this period that I first met the late Julius Beerbohm, (a brother of the distinguished actor-manager), and formed a close friendship, which endured until the former's sad and premature death, not long ago. Julius Beerbohm was a genius—nothing more nor less—and a Bohemian, in the true sense of the word, but one endowed with such

versatile talents that, although his poems, both grave and gay would, if published, have created a sensation in the literary world, he could also compete in any important commercial enterprise with the shrewdest City men in London. So sound and practical were Beerbohm's views, and facile his powers of expression, that he was often asked to draw up a prospectus, and yet he could, a few hours later, recite his own charming verses impromptu, over an after-dinner cigarette, with equal facility. "The Poet" (as he was known to his friends) had also travelled much, and his *Wanderings in Patagonia*, though a truthful record of experiences, reads more like some delightful novel than a commonplace book of travel. But Southern Europe was the land he loved best to dwell in, and talk about. To quote from an obituary notice which appeared in the *Athenæum*:—

"Julius Beerbohm knew the fair features of France and Spain, as he knew their literatures, from long and loving study; his lyrical gift was spontaneous, natural, and unforced. Of the technicalities and pedantries of the prosodists he knew little, and recked, if possible, still less, for he wrote by the guidance of an exquisite metrical ear. But his verses must ever seem to lose in the printing, for lack of the musical voice that set them off so deftly."

Nevertheless, I will here give, for the reader's benefit, two or three of the many poetical gems

which have lain buried too long, and which would certainly have achieved literary fame years ago, had they been conceived by a less modest, and, I should perhaps add, (so far as the worth of his work was concerned) careless writer. Perhaps the most beautiful lines ever written by Beerbohm, are graven, as an epitaph, on the tomb of his intimate friend, the late Lord Dupplin, in Scotland. But he generally wrote in a more happy and humorous vein. The following, for an instance, appeared in the same number of the *Athenæum* as the notice I have quoted from:—

THE BUTTERFLY

(Garden Scandal)

By the scent of their breath when evening closes,
  By the pain of their thorns that sting,
I will play no more with the treacherous roses,
  They have done me an evil thing.

They have whispered a story of gossiping tattle
  In the listening lilac's ear,
Who already have rustled their venomous prattle
  Through the garden—afar and near.

They have vowed, as I basked in the cup of a flower,
  In the heat of a noonday sun,
That my blue little cousin alit on my bower,
  That he wooed me—and shame!—that he won.

Now my own white lover's dear heart is aching,
  He has heard and believed the lie;
And mine with sorrow is burthened to breaking,
  And I think that I wish to die!

By the scent of their breath when evening closes,
By the pain of their thorns that sting,
I will play no more with the treacherous roses,
They have done me an evil thing.

The author of the above was, like myself, a citizen of the world, and we used to meet, at odd times, in all kinds of places: Vienna and Petersburg, Rome or Monte Carlo, but most frequently in Paris. The marvellous rapidity with which my friend could express his thoughts, on any commonplace subject in verse, (in almost any European language), is shown by the following, which was hastily scribbled on a *Petit Bleu*, while the writer was taking his early *déjeuner*, after arriving in Paris by the night mail from London, and which I received one morning at my apartment in the Avenue Carnot:—

"My dear Harry,

"Tel que le pigeon voyageur
Dans pays lointain laché
Vole droit chez lui—guidé
Par le seul instinct du cœur,

"Ainsi moi, à peine en France
(Où je fais un court séjour),
Vers toi—pour dire 'Bon-jour'
Tout droit mon âme se lance.

"Beerbohm.

"Hôtel Chatham,
"Friday, May 8th."

"The Poet" occasionally realized considerable sums by successful speculation, but had not the vaguest notion of the value of money, which, when

he had it, was at every one's disposal. He was tall, but a slender, frail-looking man, yet really very wiry and muscular, as I once saw when he gained a friendly trial of strength over a popular infantry colonel, who had once been a champion middle-weight of the British Army. In Paris, we used to pass much of our time together amongst the artistic element of the Butte and Quartier Latin, and the old "Chat Noir" was our frequent resort. Paul Delmet, the Montmartre composer, was then practically unknown, and I fancy his after fame was partly due to Beerbohm's enthusiastic criticisms of those exquisite little *chefs-d'œuvre*—*Rose d'Amour* and *Stances à Manon*. The Poet could neither sing nor play, but was a passionate lover of music of any kind, and, on summer evenings, we used sometimes to dine at Armenonville, and stroll down to the banks of the Seine to listen to the players (who are wont to gather there) of the *cor de chasse*; that essentially French instrument, which I can never hear anywhere out of France without a lump in my throat, and a longing for dear, distant Paris. My friend never cared much for London, except in summer, and it was I who suggested his writing verses descriptive of some London street, or square, shrouded in a November fog, with that depressing adjunct, the muffin bell, echoing through the silent dusk. And this is what he wrote, on the back of a menu at a tiny restaurant, where we sometimes ate *spaghetti*, in Soho, previous to his

departure the same day for the island of Majorca, where he lived for some weeks in the old monastery once occupied by Chopin and George Sand:—

IMPRESSION DE NOEL

(*A Londres*)

My window looks on a London square,
Its skeleton trees are begrimed and bare,
Its flowerless grass plot sodden and grey—
A vision of squalor, gloom, and decay;
Above is a heavy leaden sky,
A sun like a blear and bloodshot eye,
Whose fickle, uncertain, watery stare
Sheds a bilious haze o'er the yellow air.

With the discord of street cries and rattling carts
My tortured ear in agony smarts,
While the shriek of an organ ground by a ghoul
Carry worry and fret to my tortured soul,
And muffled and mournful (some hymn of Hell)
Hark; there is tolling—the Muffin Bell!

Julius Beerbohm was—like most men of genius—very eccentric in some ways; for instance, he would never consent to be proposed as a member for a London club, averring, (and perhaps with some reason) that he could not endure the gloom and solemnity which pervades so many of these establishments. Thus I could only seldom persuade him to dine at a certain Service Club, to which, (having held a Militia commission in early youth), I belong, and which is of the ultra-decorous order. And, anent this same club, I recollect, some

years ago, a distinguished French geologist arrived from Paris, bringing me a letter of introduction, on his first visit to England. It was arranged that I should meet the Professor one morning at the Charing Cross Hotel, and show him over the School of Mines in Jermyn Street. On the way, we looked in at the club, and I could see that my companion was deeply impressed by its vast dimensions, and architectural splendour. We sat for a while in the drawing-room, almost deserted at that early hour, while the *savant* gazed around him, with keen appreciation of the severe and almost monastic surroundings. "Magnificent," he said at length, in a hushed and reverent tone; "truly magnificent, and a worthy temple, indeed, of our great science! But may I ask where the specimens are kept?" And the mistake was perhaps pardonable, for, with one or two exceptions, a *cercle* in Paris is, outwardly at any rate, far more cheerful and inviting than its English prototype.

Of late years, I saw but little of Beerbohm, (which was less my fault than that of my extended travels), and the following lines from his brilliant pen were written when we had not met for over a year. A strain of sadness, in contrast to my friend's usual sunny and light-hearted vein, runs through them, and I cannot help thinking that they were inspired by some strange premonition of the end, which came so suddenly not long after. The lines are, as usual, written hurriedly, in pencil, on a sheet of foreign letter-paper.

"Grand Hotel d'Europe,
Rue Michel,
St. Petersbourg.

"Once when the cakes and ale were sweet
With zest youth's palate sharp imparts,
How frequent then we used to meet
In France and England's better parts—
To break the bread, to carve the meat,
And quaff the wine that gladdens hearts!
But now I only catch your eye
In hansoms as you rattle by!

"What ivy now to what oak clings?
The itch-curst spirit of the day
Frets us to roam on aimless wings,
Nor grants a fleeting moment's stay—
To meet and muse on goodly things.
We pant and speed—but make no way.
So the poor squirrel, in its cage
Spins ever round, with senseless rage.

"They live perchance, the most, the best,
Who with their books and friendships dwell
'Mid home's calm aisles and cloistered rest,
Yet list to all the world may tell,
And weave at fancy's swift behest
What dreams they choose at travel's spell.
See *they* not more than he who flies
Past all things, with flight-dazzled eyes?

"Friend, time grows grey for you and me,
The harvest and the gleaning's won,
The fruit is gathered from the tree,
And bright though still may shine the sun
'Tis sinking toward the chilly sea
Where it must die, when day is done.
So let the short hours that remain
Be stored with wisdom's honeyed gain!

"Let us be wise, and as beseems
Ripe years (though we surrender not
The right to grow young in our dreams)
Resigned, accept all nature's lot—
Unswerving as the ice-bound streams
Spring's wild warm days that have forgot!
Folly were now an irksome task
No longer fits us Pierrot's mask!

"So far so good! I will finish it some day! I passed you in a hansom recently! Hence these tears! I am *not* in Petersburg, but in Leicestershire, so the paper means nothing! If in town arrange to meet. A letter will find *me* at ——. May I find *it!*

"Yours ever,

"POET."

Happily, this letter was productive of a meeting, one of our last in my poor friend's chequered, but brilliant, career, and we met, not in London, but Paris, one bright May morning, when I found Beerbohm enjoying the air and sunshine outside the Café de la Paix. The Poet was, as usual, alone, for he chose but few real friends, and abhorred casual acquaintances, although no man could show more courtesy and tolerance when wearied by an uncongenial companion. "Who are you going with?" once asked a friend, when the Poet had announced his intention of witnessing the "Grand Prix" at Longchamps. "I am going alone," he replied, adding absently, but with perfect sincerity, "I think it will be more amusing!"

The last letter I ever received from him in verse was shortly after returning from my land expedition from Paris to New York, viâ the Béring Straits, although I never actually saw him again, until I stood at his bedside just before the end. The letter had no commencement or end, and was in his usual happy, careless vein.

"TO HARRY DE WINDT

"(*Retour de Siberie*)

'So thou art back from far Siberia's snows
Whom the grim north had fain retained of prey,
Thou who hadst dared to break his jealous sway
Undaunted, searching through his icy floes
Piled endlessly obstructing, for some way
Of travel free from risk to life or nose
By rail across the mighty stretch that goes
From Paris unto far Columb-i-a!
What though, de Windt, thy valiancy of thought
And doughty action bear not fruit of Time,
And, possibly, thy railway come to nought,
Yet not the less thy due is light of lime!
High honors from us dwellers by the Thames,
And gold largesse from lectures at St. James!

"J. B."

A few months after the above lines were sent me, I arrived from Paris, one afternoon in the early spring-time, and calling at my club, was told, through the telephone, that my old friend was lying seriously ill of pneumonia. Within a few minutes, I was with him, but the poor fellow was delirious, scarcely recognized me, and died early on the following

morning. Let me here impress on the reader that the trivial examples I have given of the late Julius Beerbohm's works were written, so to speak, in jest, and never with a view to publication. A short time before he died, however, my friend had been induced, with great difficulty, to correct his writings, and he himself showed me the proofs of some of his finer works, then in the hands of a publisher. Up till the present time, however, these have not seen the light.

Poor Julius Beerbohm! How many men might have been better spared! "The Poet" was not only one of the best and truest friends I have ever possessed, but certainly the most talented and fascinating companion I have ever come across, during a long and varied experience of all sorts and conditions of people, wise and foolish, in all parts of the world. And now, therefore, when helplessly writhing in the tentacles of some deadly, but well-meaning, bore, or listening to the prosy babblings of (so-called) *raconteurs*, is it strange that the following lines, (I forget where I read them) should occasionally recur to me?

> He has been dead so many years,
> The record on his grave is dim,
> But oh! the men one sees and hears!
> How dead *they* seem, compared to *him!*

During the period of inactivity between my first and second journeys of penal investigation to Siberia, I spent most of my time in Paris, where I was one

day offered a very lucrative appointment as private secretary to a well-known American millionaire, and proprietor of a great New York journal, but as this would naturally have put a stop to any further wanderings into the attractive unknown, I was compelled to decline the offer. The latter did not come, (as the reader may have inferred), from Mr. James Gordon Bennett, whose acquaintance I also made at this time, and by whom I was once hopeful of being sent on an expedition to Timbuctoo for the *New York Herald*, but the project fell through. I kept my hand in, however, by doing occasional work for the London and Paris papers, and, when not in Paris, visiting various European capitals, and the wilder parts of Spain, Morocco, and Southern Russia, in search of copy. And it was while engaged in Paris, on this free-lance journalism, that I nearly met with a fate which is usually reserved for crowned heads, and other more distinguished personages than the humble writer of these records—that of being blown to atoms by a dynamite bomb!

The extreme anarchist party was then very active in Paris, and the explosion of infernal machines occurred with unpleasant frequency, often in the most frequented and fashionable parts of the city, such as the Quartier de l'Étoile, and the restaurant of the Hôtel Terminus. The newspapers were filled with the daring and murderous exploits of the terrorist Ravachol, who for so long managed to elude capture at the hands of the smartest detectives in Europe,

and it was his arrest which led indirectly to my narrow escape. And this is how the latter came about.

I was dining with a friend on the staff of the *Figaro* at the "Tour d'Argent" (a restaurant overlooking the Seine which I can safely commend to the reader), when news was brought us that Ravachol had just been captured in a wine shop, the landlord having recognized him from a woodcut in *Le Petit Journal*. My host rushed away at once, and dinnerless, for further particulars, after arranging to meet me the following day, to take a few snapshots of the spot where the infamous scoundrel had at last been laid by the heels. For all Paris and London were talking of the sensational arrest, which had taken place at the Café Very, a shabby little place frequented by the working classes, on the Boulevard de Sebastopol. I met my friend there at four o'clock the next day, and, in order to gain information, we ordered refreshments in a murky little room with sanded floor and a zinc counter. Some one had just cut the word "Ravachol" with a penknife into the greasy wooden table at which we sat—the very one at which the assassin was drinking when seized by the police. The landlord was, of course, doing a roaring trade, and his buxom wife was selling his photograph at fifty centimes, as the hero of the hour. Poor fellow! His triumph was short-lived! We left the *café* towards five o'clock, and the very next day, at precisely the same hour, the place was com-

pletely wrecked by a bomb secreted under the table at which we had been sitting only twenty-four hours previously, killing the man who occupied my seat! The motive, of course, was revenge, and the perpetrator of this outrage was discovered and eventually guillotined, for three lives were lost, including that of the poor landlord who had given us such graphic details of his important capture.

In addition to newspaper work, I now tried my hand at fiction, and wrote a novel: *A Queer Honeymoon*, which was published in London, and ran through three editions. And life in Paris was so easy and pleasant, that I fancy I should eventually have become a confirmed *boulevardier*, and occasionally scribbled for the Press, on a marble-topped table, cigarette in mouth, and something green or amber at my elbow, had not one September morning brought me a large official envelope, sealed with the familiar double eagle. The letter was from the Prison Department at Petersburg, and contained a suggestion that I should resume my investigations in Siberia, and visit, not only the prisons and mines of Trans-Baikalia, but also the island of Sakhalin, which then had a very unsavoury penal renown. A journey of such magnitude was not to be lightly undertaken, and the same evening found me speeding, in an express train, towards the Russian capital, where I was met by Monsieur Galkin Vrasky, then President of the Russian Exile Department. Having been assured

by this gentleman that I should be furnished with even greater powers and facilities than on my previous journey of inspection, I gladly undertook the task, and arranged to leave for Japan (which was to be the base of operations) in the early spring of 1894.

During my absence in Russia, S—— of the *Figaro* (who shared my Café Very adventure) had been away on a trip to England, and was full of his doings in London. One of his impressions of the latter was so unconsciously humorous that I relate it—if only to show what distorted notions a Frenchman generally gains of the ways and customs of any foreign country which he may happen to visit. Knowing the universal admiration which a great civic functionary excites across the Channel, I asked S—— if he had seen the Lord Mayor. "*Mais je crois bien, mon cher*," was his reply. "*Ce personnage bizarre en écarlate et chapeau tricorne qui se promène toute la journée autour du Mansion 'Ouse—Mon Dieu! quelle corvée!*" And it was some time before I discovered that my friend's Mansion House was really the Royal Exchange, and his imaginary "Most Worshipful," the Beadle generally to be seen outside that imposing structure. One evening at a dinner-party I told this story to Sir Francis Burnand, who was so taken with its Gallic humour that the joke was shortly afterwards illustrated in the classic pages of *Punch*.

During the winter before my departure for the

Far East I took a short run down the Dalmatian coast, past Abbazia to Ragusa—that gem of the Adriatic in more ways than one—for there is no climate in Europe to equal its bright sunshine and balmy breezes in winter-time. Then I pushed on to Montenegro, expecting to find a wild and interesting principality, and was grievously disappointed. For, even here, the trail of the cheap tourist is over the land! And the bloodthirsty warriors of yore actually carry gingham umbrellas!

XIV

OVERRATED JAPAN—SOME FAMOUS NIHILISTS

JAPAN is, no doubt, an interesting country, from an historical point of view, and from the truly remarkable energy and enterprise which have recently made this brave little nation a first-class power. But I have never yet been able to appreciate the attractions it is said to possess for most English travellers, especially the engaging simplicity of the natives. Personally, I much prefer to deal with the much-maligned Celestial, and most British merchants in the Far East will endorse my opinion. No one can, of course, deny that Japan is a rich treasure-house of the arts and crafts, and the mere fact that these diminutive people, with their childish ways and little paper houses, may one day become a terrible menace to the European world, undoubtedly endows them with interest to the student of human nature. Their temples, too, are wonderful and impressive, as all must admit who have visited Nikko, with its lovely surroundings, and shrines of gold and lacquer, or Kioto, where one place of worship alone is said to contain thirty thousand idols, some of fabulous

worth. In springtime also, when the blossom scent is in the air, and snowy petals whiten the dark hillsides, Japan is pleasant enough, for a week or two; but go where you will throughout the island, from Shimonoseki to Cape Oma, there is a sameness about the country, which, to my mind, is scarcely atoned for by its occasional oases of historical and artistic interest. There is something *mesquin*, (I can find no other word), about a Japanese landscape, which, after a while, becomes intensely irritating, and it is the kind of scenery which essentially needs sunshine, which apparently it seldom gets; for during my visits it invariably rained four days out of the seven. But I fancy that, in England, the imaginary delights of Nippon are largely derived from literary and musical sources. For instance, Mesdames Chrysanthème and Butterfly are invariably depicted as basking in perpetual sunshine, with a turquoise sky peeping through a lattice-work of pink and white blossom. It never rains on *them*, and, in this respect, I think Messrs. Pierre Loti and Puccini have a great deal to answer for! For when I say that, in Japan, it was wet four days out of the seven, I should add that, in Yokohama, it rained all the time I was there, with the exception of one day, preceded by an earthquake, which caused serious loss of life. When the first signs occurred, at about three a.m., I, and the other guests at my hotel, fled *en masse* into the street, where we remained, in more or less scanty attire, until daybreak. And that morning, strange to say, the

sun shone gaily, and as if in derision, on the dilapidations caused by the shock.

Anyway, all things considered, I think that, with the exception of the English town of Walsall (where I was once doomed to pass a Sunday), Yokohama is the most depressing place I know; the more so that I have never landed there without hearing that some tragedy had recently occurred in the European community. On my first visit, a young Englishman had been shot dead in the street by a jealous husband (an American naval officer); and on the next occasion a popular member of the club had been poisoned by his wife, a pretty and attractive lady, whom, by the way, I saw, only the other day, serving a life sentence in England. During a period of five years, no fewer than seven of the friends and acquaintances I formed here committed suicide, which conclusively proves that Yokohama is no place for those given to the "blues," and that its depressing qualities are not solely due to my own imagination. I arrived here in a luxurious liner, and re-embarked in a Russian convict-ship, but although the latter may not sound particularly alluring, I departed without the slightest desire to prolong my stay in Japan.
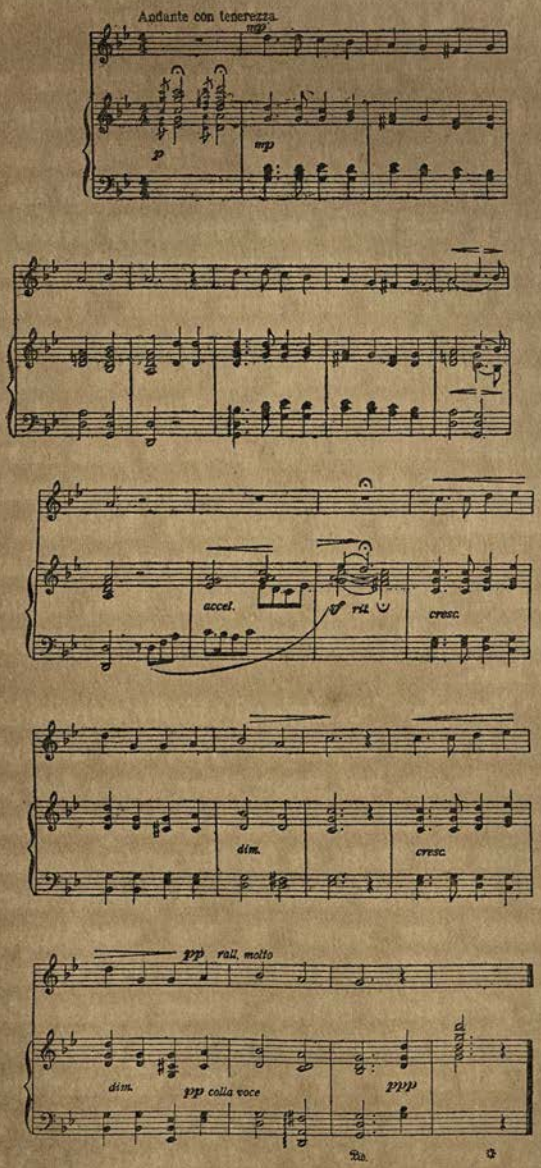
Russians generally know how to travel in comfort, and as the "Yaroslav" was a comfortable, Clyde-built steamer, commanded by officers of the Imperial Navy, I had a very pleasant time during the three weeks I remained on board.[1] It was not, of

[1] See *The New Siberia*, by the author. Chapman and Hall, London, 1896.

course, always enjoyable, especially in dirty weather, when the shindy set up in the holds caused some apprehension as to what would happen, should our eight hundred prisoners overpower the guard—which they might easily have done, seeing that the latter consisted of only fifty men. The latter had, however, a powerful ally in the numerous hoses which could, in a moment, flood the *kameras* with water from the engine-room boiler. During a typhoon, the captain told me it was sometimes appalling to enter the holds, which the howling of the gale, stifling heat, and cries of terror transformed into veritable "Infernos." I have weathered two such hurricanes on a comfortable liner, and could therefore conceive the sufferings of these fettered wretches, penned up like rats in a barrel, and dreading death with every sea that crashed overhead.

As the reader has probably never seen a prison-ship, (save, perhaps, the old Australian barque exhibited, a few years ago, on the Thames, off Blackwall) I will briefly describe the vessel on which I travelled. The "Yaroslav" contained four holds, two forward, and two abaft the engines, each constructed for two hundred men, and ventilated by portholes and an enormous air-shaft, also, in the tropics, by electric fans. These holds were divided by open iron gratings, (for the sake of coolness), which formed a corridor the length of the ship, and also subdivided certain portions of the *kameras*.[1]

[1] This circumstance once gave rise to the absurd report that Russian convicts are "kept in cages like monkeys" on board ship.



A Revolutionary Song, (prohibited in Russia), which was sung to the author by political exiles in Siberia. Published (with words) by Weekes and Co., Hanover Street, W.

The "Yaroslav" carried no female convicts, who are deported in special ships, and the men slept on low wooden platforms, provided with pillows and mattresses. I remained for nearly a month on board, and, during that time, was constantly below by day and night, but, (except in stormy weather) the holds were cool, airy, and free from smell. The clothing and food were good and sufficient, and not only was smoking permitted during the exercise hour, (when batches of twenty men were allowed on deck), but one pound of tobacco was given to each convict on embarkation at Odessa. It was coarse, rank stuff, but prisoners are not generally fastidious as to quality in this matter, as Portland and Dartmoor can testify. There is no doubt that, from every point of view, Russian exile by sea is preferable to that by land.

The "Yaroslav" contained chiefly criminals of the lowest and most depraved type, the sweepings of European Russia, but there were also a few political offenders, who had been sent to Sakhalin as conspirators against the State, or for the actual assassination of those connected with it. A pretty, dark-eyed girl shared our meals in the wardroom, and evidently felt ill at ease, sitting in the midst of bearded, gold-laced officers, whose conversation and jokes were not always of the most refined description. I felt sorry for her, (for she was the only woman on board), and one day ventured to inquire what had brought her to such an outlandish part of

the world, when, to my surprise, my rudimentary Russian was answered in the purest French, and I was astounded to hear that this young and delicate girl was proceeding to Sakhalin to be married, not, as I at first imagined, to some civil or military official, but to a young gentleman with leg-fetters, and a partly shaven head,[1] whom I frequently met on my wanderings below decks.

Then, by degrees, I learnt Olga Elnikoff's history, which would have furnished material for a three-volume novel. Her parents were of noble birth, and, like many wealthy Russians, had passed most of their time out of their own country, but Olga, an only child, was of a serious and studious turn of mind, and never cared for the frivolous existence of most of her compatriots in Paris, Rome, and other cosmopolitan resorts. Thus when, one winter, her father died suddenly in Nice, the girl remained unmoved when informed that his reckless extravagance had left his family almost destitute. An immediate return to Russia, in order to save the last fragments of a shattered fortune, was of course imperative, and the Elnikoffs settled down in the university town of Kharkoff, where Olga was able to utilize her talents by giving music and drawing lessons. And here she was fated to meet Serge Lepsky, a student associated with the extreme Revolutionary party, who was already under the observation of the police, although this fact was unknown to the Elnikoffs. Lepsky

[1] Exiles condemned to the loss of civil rights are thus disfigured.

was not handsome, but his thoughtful, serious manner and conversation attracted Olga infinitely more than the brainless chatter of the aimless idlers she had known in brighter days. Lepsky was a worker, who up till now had given little heed to women, but this girl's beauty and unselfish devotion to her mother were also to him a revelation. So, as a natural sequence, the pair fell in love with each other, and the curtain fell on the first act of the drama.

One morning, in the summer of '93, Olga took leave of her lover at the Kharkoff railway station, for business, he told her, summoned him to Kieff. Within a week he reappeared, late one night, while the Elnikoffs were at supper, much to his fiancée's delight and relief, for, in Russia, there are even brief journeys whence a traveller does not return. Serge looked tired and restless, and his usually neat dress was dusty and disordered, but Olga had mentally decided not to worry him with questions until a more propitious moment, when a knock at the outer door, followed by a confused murmur of voices, was heard. The women stared blankly at each other, as the man held up a finger to enjoin silence.

"Admittance, in the name of the Tsar!"

Lepsky, after a moment's hesitation, walked slowly to the door and obeyed. As he did so, the lamplight shone faintly on black and yellow facings and silver accoutrements. The dark landing was crowded with men. Olga knew their leader well: the Chief of Police.

"Serge Alexandrovitch Lepsky, I arrest you on suspicion of murdering Otto Peltzer near Kieff on the afternoon of the 9th of June, 1893——"

"I did it," said Serge quietly. "He deserved to die."

But the dark secret of the tragedy, afterwards divulged by her lover to Olga, will assuredly be buried with them both on that lonely island in the North Pacific Ocean. It transpired at the trial that Peltzer had been his assassin's friend and fellow-student, that the pair had set out from Kieff for a day's fishing, and that the same evening the murdered man was found by the river, with his throat cut from ear to ear. Whether the deed was committed at the instigation of the secret society to which both men belonged, or whether it was done in revenge for some personal injury, will never be known. There is, in Russia, no capital punishment (except for regicide), and Lepsky was therefore sentenced to lifelong penal servitude on Sakhalin. But, through the intervention of a Grand Duchess, with whom she had once been on friendly terms, special permission was granted to Mlle. Elnikoff to travel on board the "Yaroslav," and to marry the convict Lepsky immediately on arrival at their destination. By the same influence, Olga was appointed government schoolmistress at the penal settlement of Alexandrovsky-Post, and it was further decreed that she be parted from her husband at the conclusion of the wedding ceremony for

a period of five years, when Serge would regain his provisional liberty. But both must end their days on the island, and never even cross to the mainland of Siberia.

This pathetic little tale was related to me on deck, very early one morning, as we watched the low coast-line of Olga's new home appear, like a sleeping snake, upon the cold, grey sea. When it was concluded, I remarked that, on the previous day, my little friend had looked unusually disconsolate. "Is there nothing I can do to help you?" I asked, as for the last time we slowly paced the deck together.

"No, thank you," replied the poor girl, smiling bravely through her tears. "It was only that Serge was in punishment yesterday, and for the first time since leaving Russia I was not allowed to see him."

That same evening, when the prisoners had been landed, I returned to the ship for the handbag and fur pelisse which generally constituted my sole luggage in Siberia. The decks of the ship were deserted, but Olga had delayed her departure, and, worn out with the excitement of the day, lay fast asleep in a wicker chair. A book lay open before her; one which I had given her at parting, chiefly because its incidents so closely resembled those of this little heroine's own short, but eventful life. The work was called *Mlle. Ixe*, and she had been reading the letter therein headed "A Russian Prison," which might well have been written in her own case. "The prison walls vanish," it ran, "and

I see the great elms, and thatched cottages sleeping in the English sunlight. I hear the voices of village children singing, 'He hath brought light to them that sit in darkness,' and I dream that there is a God who smiles, at least, upon England."

A well-known American author (the late Colonel Savage) once wrote: "The Inferno of Sakhalin has no parallel in human nature. It is the gate of an eternal hell." Three weeks on the island convinced me, (after reading this) that the Colonel could never have been there, which is indeed the fact. For I have seldom visited a more attractive spot than Alexandrovsky-Post, and, as I drove from the harbour to the town, through meadows carpeted with wild flowers, some snowy peaks on the horizon, the tinkle of cattle-bells, and scent of new-mown hay, recalled summer days in Switzerland. Only a gaunt, bare building with grim, grey walls and iron-barred windows seemed to scrawl the word "prison" across the smiling landscape, and detract from the cheerful impression produced by the green-domed church, and neat white houses clustered around it. The main street, too, presented a certain amount of activity, and I was astonished to find men and women in prison dress, strolling freely about amongst others clothed in ordinary attire, the latter being free colonists who had served their term of imprisonment. Every one saluted me, but I discovered that this politeness is enforced by the regulations, for here, if a man is not an official, he is, or has been, a convict.

I saw, as usual, everything there was to be seen while staying with the Governor in a charming house, replete with every comfort, notwithstanding the fact that we were waited on by murderers, who, I was told, make the best criminal domestic servants. The weather was clear and delightful, (barring an occasional sea fog), but summer here only lasts three months, and, for the remainder of the year, the island is icebound, and the cold intense. The prisons, both on the coast and inland, were as humanely conducted as those I had seen in Siberia, although I here witnessed some ghastly punishments which would never be tolerated on the mainland. For instance, the town gaol contained a brawny-looking ruffian, whose sole duty was to wield the knout, and who was kept rigidly apart from his fellow-convicts, who, had he passed the night in a public cell, would certainly have torn him in pieces. The "plet" (as the knout is now called) is a truly terrible weapon, consisting of a lash of solid leather three feet long, tapering off from the handle to three circular thongs the size of a man's finger. Blows are given from left to right and *vice versa*, laying the flesh open in all directions, and death from blood-poisoning occasionally follows a flogging, which is, however, only administered to punish assault on those in authority. Stern measures are no doubt necessary when dealing with the human devils who form two-thirds of this penal population, and the Governor remarked that, were the plet abolished, his life would not be worth

a week's purchase. The clink of chains was therefore audible in every *kamera* I visited here, and, in several of the latter, I found men chained to wheelbarrows, a form of torture even more dreaded than the knout. This penalty can be inflicted for three years at a stretch, and seeing that, while undergoing it, a man cannot even turn in his sleep without dragging his burthen with him, I could not conceal my disgust at this barbarous practice. But I have always made it a rule to expose the dark, as well as the light, side of the Russian exile system, and can only hope that this iniquitous rule has now been abolished.

But enough of these horrors, and before leaving Sakhalin let me tell the reader of a famous character I met during a journey into the interior, which was accomplished with one companion, my driver, who had killed his wife and brother, under exceptionally brutal circumstances, in Moscow. But he was a *bon diable*, an excellent coachman, and we soon became good friends. "Suppose he kills *me?*" I asked when taking leave of my host, and not quite relishing the thought of several days, (and nights), alone in such queer company. "What would be the good?" was the laughing reply. "He could not get away!" and the thought was certainly a consolatory one.

The celebrity aforementioned dwelt at Rykovskaya, a tiny village thirty miles from Alexandrovsky, where she occupied a pretty little cottage, after several years endured, not only in prison, but in

chains. Sophie Blöffstein would have made an admirable wife and helpmate for the notorious Lavine, although it is perhaps fortunate, for a future generation, that this union has never taken place! For Sophie's career was once the talk of Europe, where successful frauds on a large scale earned her the sobriquet of the "Golden Hand." How the latter began life is not quite clear, although she was well known in a certain class of society in London, Paris, and Vienna, in which latter city, (while masquerading as a countess), she squandered, in one year, over £40,000, chiefly obtained by blackmail and burglary. Numberless books and songs have been published in Russia anent this remarkable criminal, who, once a queen of the *demi-monde* in Paris, now supplied this remote settlement with eggs and vegetables. Sophie received me most hospitably, and I sat down in her snug little parlour and partook of iced *kvas*,[1] while my hostess talked freely of her past adventures in England and on the Continent. She was a short, slightly built woman, with a delicate profile, clear blue eyes, and traces of beauty which even prison life had failed to obliterate—indeed, she was even now good-looking, her auburn hair being fringed with some attempt at coquetry. We spoke of London and Paris, which latter she knew well, having lived there one summer in regal style, until arrested by Russian detectives. But the "Golden Hand's" most famous *coup* was when she attracted

[1] Spruce beer.

the attention of the Shah of Persia, (on one of his visits to Petersburg), with the intention of relieving His Majesty of some of his diamonds. Indeed, Blöffstein actually obtained permission to travel in the imperial train, but her plot was discovered just in time, and she was sent for a long term of penal servitude to Eastern Siberia. Here, having regained her provisional liberty, Sophie organized a gang of highway thieves, and worked the post roads with great success; but this venture eventually ended in her arrest and deportation for life to Sakhalin. Sophie may now be dead, for all I know, and she would certainly not be mourned by the prison authorities, although the "Golden Hand" was one of the most humorous and entertaining women I have ever met.

From Sakhalin I travelled (viâ Vladivostok) to the prisons of Eastern Siberia, nearly a month's journey, by sea, road, and river. The famous mines, of which we have read so much in England, are situated near the town of Nertchinsk, and are of gold and silver. With one or two exceptions, the shafts appeared to be in good working order, and the convicts went down and came up in shifts, as in England, although men are supposed to "rot underground" in Siberia! In summer they rise at five a.m., have tea, porridge, and bread, and go below until noon, when they return to the prison for a meal of soup, meat, and *kvas*. From two o'clock until seven, more work in the mines; then follows supper, a smoke, if desired, and at nine p.m. lights out. In winter there is only

work for four hours in the morning, and on Sundays (and the innumerable Russian saints' days) no work at all.

But my chief object was to visit an establishment within a few miles of Nertchinsk, wherein only the most dangerous State prisoners are confined. Akatui is a natural prison, surrounded by mountains which, upon entering the valley, seem to close upon one like a trap. As I drove through the village at dusk, the squalid huts seemed deserted. Here and there a light glimmered, momentarily darkened as the jangle of our collar bells brought some startled inmate to the window, but though it was still dusk the entire village had retired to rest. The next day, while walking about the place, I noticed an air of gloom and severity very unusual in other Siberian settlements. Armed warders met me at every turn, and the very hill-tops bristled with sentries. Mr. Kennan once wrote: "If there is in Siberia a more cheerless, God-forsaken place than Kara,[1] it is the snowy, secluded valley of Akatui"; and here, at any rate, we cordially agree!

Akatui prison is a very small one, but its air of cleanliness showed that the occupants were not of the criminal class. The walls and floors of the *kameras* were decorated with pine branches, the pungent odour of which, mingled with cigarette smoke, pervaded the prison. Tin drinking-mugs

[1] A prison near Akatui (now abolished) where political exiles were formerly confined.

contained bunches of wild flowers, and toilet requisites, books, and writing materials were placed on wooden shelves over the sleeping-platforms. But the grey prison garb was that worn by criminals, and the jangle of fetters was incessant. I met here Göttze and Vraginsky, both sent here for life for participating in the Yakoutsk prison mutiny, Khotchurikin, serving the same term for the attempted assassination of the Governor of Kazan, and Minor, the latter a man of good family, who had taken high honours at Yaroslav University. His brother was a professor at Moscow, and a pupil of the famous Charcot. Khotchurikin looked almost a boy, and wore leg-irons, which he vainly tried to conceal under a table. A number of books were on the latter, (one in English)[1] and a printing-press stood in a corner. The Governor, who accompanied me, treated the prisoners more like guests than prisoners, and uncovered while in their presence. Every one smoked, and Göttze told me that he was allowed to see his wife, who lived in the village, once a week. All agreed that the life was a terrible one, but that work in the mines was not unduly severe, and that the authorities did their best to make life as bearable as possible. The Governor left me alone with these men, for perhaps half an hour, to converse on general topics, and their familiarity with quite recent events in Europe speedily convinced me that the Akatui politicals have some secret means of communication

[1] *The Crises of the Nineteenth Century*, by Hyndman.

with the outer world.[1] But it was pathetic to see the eagerness with which the poor fellows started a new subject of conversation whenever I showed signs of departure, in order to prolong an interview the like of which might never occur again. Another cell contained only a solitary occupant, a florid, middle-aged man with spectacles and thin, reddish-grey hair. He was writing as we entered, but rose, made a stiff, formal bow, and reseating himself, resumed his work without another glance in our direction. The man looked a weird and grotesque figure in frieze prison clothes, several sizes too large for him, and anything but suggestive of his real self; for Slavinsky was once the most dreaded terrorist in Russia, and so crafty and resourceful, that it was deemed prudent to keep him apart from his comrades, even in this secure stronghold, eight thousand miles from Petersburg. A mere chance had led to this man's deportation. While in Berlin, a few months previously, he had been arrested for a trivial offence, and his lawyer rashly claimed his client's discharge as a Russian subject. This entailed extradition to Petersburg, where a plot had, meanwhile, been discovered, which led to the nihilist leader's condemnation for life to the Siberian mines.

That night a mail was leaving for Europe, and, after dinner, the Governor had to wade through a mass of correspondence, written by the exiles to relatives and friends in Europe. I was shown a letter written by a young student with whom I had

[1] See Chapter XVIII.

that day conversed for some time. "An Englishman," it said, "has visited us to-day. It will be interesting to see what he writes about us in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.[1] Try and send me a newspaper." And it is significant to note that this letter was sent without erasure of any kind.

I returned to Japan to find that war had been declared between that country and China, and that a telegram was awaiting me, with instructions to proceed to Corea as special correspondent to a London evening paper. But the difficulties placed in the way by the Tokio authorities were endless; and, as events turned out, correspondents were compelled to kick their heels about Yokohama and Shanghai for fully a month before they were officially appointed to the Japanese army. Besides which, I was seedy and knocked up with my recent journey, so reluctantly resigned the job in favour of another, and fresher, man. Nevertheless, my telegram was the first to reach London with news of Japan's first decisive victory. It appeared in a "special" at eleven p.m., and I may add that it was written several hundred miles from the scene of action, and while discussing an excellent dinner at the Shanghai Club! This feat was accomplished through the kindly agency of a Japanese correspondent at the front, with whom I had made friends while in Yokohama, and who promised to dispatch me a wire to Shanghai, should anything important occur before I left the latter place for England!

[1] For which I then corresponded.

XV

A COCKNEY CHARACTER—SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF OSCAR WILDE—A DAY WITH DEIBLER

I DO not suppose many of my readers ever knew him personally, but most of them have probably heard of that mysterious and eccentric individual, the late "Marquis de Leuville." He was an extraordinary being: a short, paunchy individual, who walked with a waddle, (caused by boots several sizes too small), and padded his shoulders until his stumpy figure resembled the letter "V." De Leuville's appearance was a kind of travesty of Buffalo Bill, Dartagnan, and some dandy of the Regency, for a huge sombrero covered his long greasy locks, and he affected the caped mantle which draped the shoulders of the gay musketeer, while white cuffs were turned back over his coat-sleeves, *à la D'Orsay*. Everything about the Marquis was plastered with coronets, even to his shirt-front, and he was in every way a luminous example of the blue blood of France until he spoke, when his accent was of the purest Cockney. Nor was this surprising, seeing that this modern Bayard was the son of one Mr. Oliver, a Strand hairdresser! But very few people were acquainted

with this fact, amongst them a well-known comedian, who once partook of a dinner given to the "Marquis" by some Americans in London, who were under the impression that they were entertaining a most distinguished guest. "I feel better for that;" said the latter, genially expansive at the conclusion of the meal, during which he had brilliantly enacted the foreign *grand seigneur*; "*Sapristi!* I had vat you English call a twist." "Yes," said the comedian, to whom the remark was addressed, "you had indeed," adding absently, "an 'Oliver' Twist!"

I first met the Marquis one summer evening at Boulogne—at the Casino—where he was walking about with a mahogany case of duelling-pistols, emblazoned with the arms and quarterings of his ancestors. He had, he told me, crossed from England in order to fight a duel, but had been unable to find his adversary, which, perhaps, was scarcely surprising, seeing that the latter did not exist. Anyway, the pursuit was abandoned for a time, while the foiled duellist accompanied me to the *café*, and joined me in a Cognac and seltzer, before resuming his imaginary, but active, search.

De Leuville, (alias Oliver), was then long past middle-age, but a most entertaining companion, who could, on occasion, suddenly drop the haughty patrician, and display the keen, if somewhat plebeian, humour of the lowly-born Londoner. I remember, on the evening in question, we strolled into the gambling-rooms, after my new acquaintance had

furnished me with the stirring archives of the De Leuvilles from the period of Joan of Arc, a graphic description of the imaginary *châteaux* he had inherited in various parts of France, concluding with spicy details of an intrigue with a certain Polish princess, whispered in strict secrecy over the marble table. But when we reached the *Petit Chevaux*, all traces of the *ancienne noblesse* vanished, and the Marquis might have been an excited Margate excursionist as he gingerly staked, and won, a two-franc piece. "That's all right," he muttered, as he pocketed the coin and moved away from the table; "that'll pay for a week's washing, at any rate!"

Nevertheless, with all his faults, the Marquis was a kind-hearted, generous old soul, and the kindly notices which appeared in the press after his death, a couple of years ago, proved that he left behind him more friends than enemies. As a writer in the *Sporting Times* remarked:—

"If ever I felt inclined to blush for my craft, it was when a newspaper, having no legal consequences to fear, applied such epithets as 'Bravo' and 'Impostor' to that once merry old soul, the 'Marquis of Leuville.' I knew him well, and save that he drenched himself with patchouli, and swore that all his time was taken up by countesses, he was quite an amusing old fellow. A man who could fool himself and his friends by holding a reception at which only the French language was spoken, and who, after the ladies had withdrawn, could warble a

ballade dedicated to his creditors, with the refrain 'They're beginning to know me now,' had too much humour to be taken as a serious impostor." It is only fair to add that De Leuville had musical talent, and one of his songs achieved a considerable popularity in London. But the poems which he published himself, and presented to any friend who would accept them, were poor stuff indeed.

Boulogne, where I passed a couple of days on my return from Siberia, was very full that year, and it is a place I always retain a sneaking affection for, notwithstanding its comfortless hotels, noxious odours, and conspicuous vulgarity. For what can be more delightful than the surroundings? The quaint, red-roofed villages of Souverain-Moulin and Hesdigneul, or the Vallée du Denacre, and its charming old farm-house, surrounded by vine-trellised arbours, old-fashioned flowers, and babbling brooks, which can be enjoyed in conjunction with delicious *tartines* and *café au lait*. The town and shadeless, glary port are, of course, impossible in summer-time, but even plebeian Boulogne has its picturesque side, if you only know where to look for it. Ascend the Grande Rue to the sleepy "old town," with its crumbling arches and moss-grown walls, or climb on to the shady ramparts overlooking a glorious expanse of field, forest, and blue sea, and peace and solitude are yours, to say nothing of pure air. Here you may rest undisturbed, save, perhaps, by some solitary nursemaid or sable-clad priest, with white bands and

breviary, like an illustration out of *L'Abbé Constantin.* Just above you towers the dome of the cathedral, below is the old "Haute Ville," with its cool, dark streets winding, like snakes, into the warmth and sunshine of the ill-paved, grass-grown Place de la Justice. Further afield lies a panorama of grassy plains, dotted with belts of dark woodland and white villages, past which the River Liane lazily ripples to find itself high and dry in the sand shoals, a mile from the sea. On a still, clear day, this spot is as quiet and inviting as the tawdry lower town is the reverse.

My book *The New Siberia* was received in England with the same incredulity and disfavour as *Siberia as it is.* On the day it was published, I met Oscar Wilde, (who was then at the height of his fame and popularity) at a dinner-party at the Savoy, where, as one of his plays had just been produced with enormous success, he was the lion of the hour.

But I was almost startled when my new book was, for a brief while, under discussion, at the violence with which Wilde attacked the latter, and my defence of Russian prisons, of which (as he afterwards smilingly admitted) he knew absolutely nothing, and cared less!

"Any Englishman," he declared; "who defends such a barbarous system, should himself be banished to Siberia."

"But I am only half an Englishman," I protested.

"Then half of you should be exiled," replied Oscar sternly, but with a twinkle in his eye which amused me more than it did the rest of his audience, who were anticipating a serious and interesting discussion.

The next time I saw Wilde was two years later at the Old Bailey, as he was giving evidence, on his own behalf, in the trial, which followed that of the late Marquis of Queensberry. The defendant looked exactly as he had done at the Savoy—though, perhaps, a trifle more carefully dressed—cool and collected, notwithstanding the fact that many who, a short time previously, had fawned at his feet, were now present gloating over his downfall. And the man's pluck and coolness under these terrible conditions astounded me, for I had always regarded him as a poor, effeminate creature, who at the first sign of danger would curl up like a hedgehog. Yet, even in his darkest hour of disgrace and peril, this brilliant Irishman's powers of repartee never deserted him, although Sir Frank Lockwood's cross-examination was, on this occasion, unusually merciless and even vindictive.

I recollect one of Wilde's replies, which was eminently characteristic:

"I suppose," said Sir Frank, "these suppers you gave were composed of all the luxuries in and out of season——"

"Pardon me!" politely interrupted the defendant, raising his hand, "but my doctor's orders——"

"Never mind your doctor's orders, sir!" thundered Lockwood, his rosy face now crimson with anger. "Never mind your doctor's orders——"

"Unfortunately for my health, I never do," was the quiet rejoinder, which convulsed the court, but which, like the prisoner's other witticisms, scarcely impressed either judge or jury in his favour.

Only once again did I meet this ill-fated genius, a few weeks after the expiration of his sentence. I had arrived in Naples from New York, and, one afternoon, saw London's shattered idol seated in solitary state, with a *Bock* before him, outside the Café Gambrinus. The change in him was terrible, and his weary eyes had the furtive, hunted look with which a long association with prisons has made me only too familiar. The exile had, he told me, just been offered a large sum to lecture in America, (a scheme inspired by his exquisite *Ballad of Reading Gaol*), but had refused it, as he now only needed peace and rest, which, poor fellow, came to him, and in their fullest sense, not long afterwards. Yet, even now, the poet was able to regard life with a certain dry humour, which had probably sustained him through those past days of shame and captivity. "We won't quarrel any more about Siberia!" he said, with a quizzical smile as we parted. "The prisons there can't be worse than an English gaol!"

Notwithstanding the universal scepticism shown by the English Press with regard to my capacity as

a penal authority, I was appointed as one of the British delegates to the "Paris Prison Congress," which was held at the Sorbonne in the summer of 1895, and which was intensely interesting, if only for the fact that every nation throughout the world, even to the little state of Montenegro, was represented.

About a hundred of us sat every day at the Sorbonne, to discuss various questions connected with prisoners of every class and nation, the amelioration of their lot, and utilization of their labour. Special attention was also devoted to crime in its medico-legal sense, and the papers of that greatest authority on the subject, Herr Kraft Ebing, afforded me keen interest, chiefly because this branch of penology, although it has reached such a height of perfection on the Continent, has been so neglected in England, as also, it seems to me, has the question of hereditary influence in criminals. The Congress lasted for over a fortnight, and, out of work hours, we were hospitably entertained by the French Government, and during this time, when not engaged in the inspection of the many prisons in, and around, Paris (to which delegates were admitted individually and at all hours),[1] I met many curious people in the world of crime—notably the famous Monsieur de Paris, the Public Executioner, to whom (at my

[1] The female prison of "Saint-Lazare" was certainly one of the worst, in every respect, that I have ever seen; but it will, I believe, be shortly done away with.

special request) I was presented by the French Home Office.

A brief description of a celebrity of this kind and his private life may, perhaps, interest the morbid reader. Others can skip it.

Monsieur Deibler lived in a squalid, narrow street near the Gare du Nord, and in constant dread of assassination. Deibler *fils*,[1] a genial young giant with a flaxen beard, therefore questioned me closely before admitting me to his father's apartment—over a wineshop. I found a very commonplace *bourgeois* interior. Polished parquet, light green wall-paper, a marble chimneypiece with a tawdry gilt clock; over the dining-table a white-metal chandelier, and half a dozen straight-backed cane-bottom chairs.

Deibler, who had been sitting by the window, rose to greet me. He was then about sixty, a short, stout man, with watery blue eyes and an iron-grey beard; his attire a brown tweed suit, and spotless linen. Deibler gave me his *left* hand, (his invariable practice), which was unusually small and white, and seemed shy and nervous in the presence of a stranger.

"I have executed one hundred and fifty-seven persons," said Monsieur de Paris mechanically, as though used to the question. "You wish to see the guillotine?"

We set out through narrow, tortuous streets

[1] The present executioner.

(Deibler junior following his father like a shadow) to a grimy house in the Rue Folie Regnault, in the courtyard of which, in a kind of coach-house, is kept the guillotine, the latter quite unlike the clumsy scarlet model at Madame Tussaud's, being of some dark and costly wood with metal fittings as brightly polished as those of a dentist's chair. Two uprights about twelve feet high have a cross-beam, to which is attached a steel ring, which, opening in the centre, releases the knife (and with it 120 lb. of lead) on the pressing of a lever by the operator's hand. A second before, the latter's *right* hand has struck a second lever, just beneath the former, which drops the lunette, or wooden collar, which secures the culprit's neck, the instant the bascule, or board to which he is strapped, has thrown him forward.

"*C'est ma meilleure,*" said the elder Deibler, lovingly surveying the ghastly thing, as though it were a favourite child. "*Elle a coutée trois mille francs.*"

"Do you ever speak to the condemned?" I asked, as we emerged into the sunlit courtyard from that shed of darkness and death.

Monsieur Deibler paused and looked at me with the pale, inscrutable eyes which had placidly witnessed so many horrors.

"Only one word."

"And that is?"

"*Allons!*"

Before leaving, I persuaded Monsieur Deibler to let me read the lines of his hand, as I have always been deeply interested in palmistry, and had for many years studied the subject under such able professors as Monsieur Desbarolles and Madame Blankaert, once the most expert and reliable exponents of the science in Paris, and I was much surprised to find that this wholesale destroyer of human life was really a most benevolent creature, and should have published this fact in a work which was then in the press, (*The A B C of Palmistry*,) had not the executioner expressly forbidden me to do so. I have read the palms of some thousands of men and women, of all creeds, colours, and classes of society, and can safely say that my researches in this direction have sometimes proved of inestimable advantage, especially when dealing with strangers in barbarous lands.

When people vaguely assert that palmistry is "all bosh," further discussion will generally prove that they know nothing whatever about the subject, beyond the casual information derived from some shilling handbook. Personally, I do not believe that we are permitted to look into the distant future, but I am convinced that it is possible to read a subject's character, and even important events in his past life, by the lines on his palm, or even the shape of his hand and fingers; and as a proof of this, I will give an instance which occurred in my own experience, and which was published in the

London *World* by a gentleman who happened to be travelling with me at the time. This is what he wrote:—

"De Windt is a reader of hands. The writer recollects travelling with him nearly twenty years ago from Paris to Calais, and introducing him in the railway carriage to a clergyman, of whom he could not have had any interior knowledge, who was in those days the English chaplain at Boulogne. The conversation turned upon the occult sciences, and the chaplain presently submitted his palm to the scrutiny of Harry de Windt. 'Some few years ago you lost a near relation by drowning,' exclaimed the seer. 'Yes,' replied the clergyman, 'my son was lost at sea two years ago.' A Frenchman in the corner of the carriage, impressed by this prescience, pulled off his glove, raised his hat, and begged to have *his* hand read. 'You have trouble with your family; you have an impending lawsuit,' said the palmist. 'Monsieur is perfectly right,' cried the foreigner excitedly; 'I am at this moment on my way to instruct my lawyer to take out a warrant for the arrest of my brother-in-law.'"[1]

I mention this fact, not as a proof of my skill as a delineator, but merely to give one instance of accuracy which has occurred in hundreds of other cases before and since. Unfortunately palmistry, like other occult sciences, is generally practised by

[1] *Celebrities at Home*, No. MCCLXXXIV. *World*, January 20th, 1903.

charlatans, who only possess a superficial knowledge of the science, and merely use it as a money-maker. It is so easy to buy a cheap "Manual of the Hand," study it for an hour or two, and then to pose amongst friends and strangers as a "fortune-teller." I have seen numerous instances of this—male and female—and it is probably these amateur impostors, to say nothing of (so-called) professionals, who have brought an ancient and wonderful science into disrepute in England.

Simultaneously with my work on palmistry, was published a volume of poems which I had scribbled "when I had nothing better to do" in Siberia and other places, and which were therefore entitled "Ennui de Voyage." One or two of the verses were set to music by my friend, Henri Logé; and another composer, whom I saw a good deal of at this time, was Isidore de Lara, who had forsaken London for Paris, averring that he could do better work in France than in England, the truth of which has been proved by his later works in Grand Opera.

When in London, the two beings De Lara could never abide were the insular Briton, (a genus now happily almost extinct) and the idle, purposeless man about town, and he generally let them know it. I have, therefore, heard some Englishmen complain that my friend's success caused him (to use their own expression) to "put on side"; but as the composer's intimate friends, (of whom I hope I am one),

can vouch, there never lived a more manly, unaffected being, or one with a keener sense of humour, especially when relating a joke at his own expense.

I recollect one delightful anecdote he told me, anent a certain "At Home" he was singing at a few years ago in London, and, as sometimes happens in the fashionable world, there was such a buzz of conversation that the music was quite inaudible. A famous *prima donna* was singing with De Lara, and the latter, chiefly on the lady's account, at last stopped the pianist, and addressed the now surprised audience, stating that, under the circumstances, he and Madame —— must positively decline to sing another note. This naturally caused a sensation, and De Lara, while elbowing his way through the crowd to leave the room, encountered, as he thought, the sympathetic countenance of an old gentleman standing by the doorway, and, as he passed him, commented with Bohemian frankness on the discourteous reception he had met with. "I don't agree with you at all, sir," said the old man blandly, much to De Lara's discomfiture. "There are at least a hundred people in this room who want to talk, and only you three who want to play and sing! Now why, may I ask, should you be allowed to interfere with the pleasure of the majority?" Most great artists would have regarded such a speech as an insult, but it so delighted De Lara that he told me the story, when I met him

shortly after the occurrence, with the keenest enjoyment.

De Lara, of course, speaks French like a Parisian, and we used at times to be much amused at the extraordinary French spoken by my countrymen. For instance, I was present one day at Longchamps when a speech, made by an Englishman, graphically demonstrated the perilous pitfalls into which an imperfect knowledge of French may land a foreigner. Our friend had taken up his quarters for a few months in Paris in order to acquire the language, and victimized all his French friends by his painful efforts to improve his knowledge and accent at their expense. One day, at the races, the Comtesse de B—— asked him how he was getting on in Paris, and whether he had enlarged his limited circle of friends. "Helás, non, Madame!" was the reply. "Je conny presky personne. Je ne peux pas entrer dans les maisons! Chaque après midi je suis forcé d'aller seul au café, et prendre mon '*verre solitaire*'!"

I remained in Paris for several months after the Prison Congress of '95 and found it very enjoyable, for the place was crowded with pleasant people of all nationalities. Sir Austin Lee, of the Embassy; Arthur Capel (a brother of Monsignor Capel) and his handsome wife; Hugues Le Roux, the author; Arthur Cecil; Monsieur Goron, the famous police official; Charles Brookfield; George Moore (who was then writing his *Drama in Muslin;* poor Dick Muirhead and Haddon Chambers the playwright;

Harry Quilter, the art critic, and Aubrey Stanhope of the *New York Herald*, were some of those I met, living or lingering, in Lutetia that season, and life was very idle and delightful, what with racing, coaching excursions, starlit nights at Armenonville, and (very) early mornings at the "Pré Catelan!" But I was getting somewhat weary of civilized life, and planning fresh ventures into the unknown, notably a journey to Timbuktoo, which somehow never came off, although I made a trip to Southern Russia, this time on pleasure bent.

The Crimea is a delightful place in the early autumn, and, after visiting Yalta, a now fashionable watering-place, I wandered about the battlefields, making my head-quarters at Sevastopol, and then travelled on through Russia, by easy stages, to Rostov-on-the-Don. Even in these days one seldom encounters an English tourist in these parts, and yet from June to the end of September, the climate is perfect, and the accommodation, in the larger towns, is infinitely superior to that obtainable in either Petersburg or Moscow. By the end of November I was back again in Paris, debating whether to make a journey into the interior of Morocco, or to pay Raja Brooke a long-deferred visit in Borneo, for I regard England (and especially London) as the most dreary and comfortless portion of this globe (not excepting Arctic Siberia) in winter time. Fate, however, decreed otherwise, and, as will be seen in the following chapter, a casual meeting with

a friend not only altered my plans for the immediate future, but embarked me upon an enterprise so stupendous, that its accomplishment became, for the next few years, the one aim and object of my life.

XVI

AN ALLURING PROJECT — MY FAILURE AND ITS SEQUEL — I CALL ON A MURDERER AND MEET AN OLD FRIEND

ONE wild, stormy night in the winter of '95, I was crossing the Channel from Dieppe to Newhaven, when the only passenger, besides myself, to brave the cold meat and pickles in a stuffy saloon, was the late Lord Dunmore. The latter was an old acquaintance, and we therefore adjourned, after supper, to his private cabin for coffee. "Do you know that I am going to beat your Pekin to Calais trip?" said Dunmore, when cigars were fairly alight. "I am going to try and get from New York to Paris by land!"

Now, I am not easily astonished, but this announcement fairly took my breath away, and at first I thought the speaker was joking. Surely such a journey was impossible, or so I concluded, as an imaginary map of the world (bisected by the Béring Straits) rose before me, and I therefore urged this watery barrier as an obstacle. "Oh! They will be frozen over," explained his lordship airily, and complacently ignoring the fact that ice,

even to oblige a British explorer, can scarcely be regarded as dry land!

Nevertheless, my journey from China to France seemed as insignificant, beside this new project, as a trip to Brighton when compared to a dash into Darkest Tibet, the more so that this new scheme might, as Dunmore pointed out, result in a railway between Europe and America. And so alluring was it that, before we reached Victoria, I had also resolved to try my luck, although I had not the remotest idea of the cost of such a prodigious voyage, or even of its itinerary. Lord Dunmore was therefore the originator of the idea, but, like the good sportsman he was, offered no objection to my co-operation —on condition that we started, respectively, from France and America. Unfortunately, affairs of urgent importance prevented my friend from attempting this journey, which, in the hands of such a plucky and experienced explorer, would no doubt have met with success.

All this occurred in November, 1895, but money had to be found, and it was not until April of the following year that I was able to set out for the *Pall Mall Gazette* on a journey from which even Mark Tapley would scarcely have expected to emerge with a whole skin, if even to reappear at all. For, on leaving New York, I knew no more about the regions to be traversed than when their negotiation had first been discussed on board the Channel steamer. That I must get through Alaska in

summer, cross Béring Straits, and await the winter before making my dash into unknown Asia, was all I could glean at the Geographical Society in London or anywhere else; and for an excellent reason: no one had ever even attempted the voyage before me. One fact alone stood out with clearness: the distance, roughly measured on the map, was about 20,000 miles. "This journey reminds me of Jules Verne!" said Sir Rivers Wilson, the night before I left, at the British Embassy in Washington; and it certainly then seemed almost as unreal as some of that great writer's fantastic creations. I had been the guest for a few days of the late Lord Pauncefote, whose kindness on this occasion I can never forget, and whose intervention on my behalf with the United States Government proved invaluable during the American portion of that first, but unsuccessful, journey.

My impressions of New York were distinctly unfavourable, and, although I have visited the place a dozen times since, I still regard it as the most noisy, comfortless city in the world. Moreover, there is no capital in Europe where the stranger of any class gets less for his money. I stayed at the "Waldorf" (then the best hotel), and although my surroundings were palatial (aggressively so!), and I enjoyed the doubtful privilege of dining in an overheated restaurant, patronized by that wonderful *Four Hundred*, I can safely assert that I never got a decent meal in the place, although the prices charged

would have staggered a *maître d'hôtel* at the "Ritz" or "Carlton." But there is surely a deal of nonsense talked in England about American cooking; canvas-backed duck, terrapin, and so forth; and I was therefore sadly disappointed at all the leading restaurants, where, although I sampled these so-called delicacies, everything tasted as though it had been cooked in one large cauldron. The very best American *cuisine* lacks the flavour and refinement which a man has a right to expect when he pays eight shillings for a grilled mutton cutlet! This happened to me at "Sherry's," where the said cutlet was, as usual, large enough for two men, and consequently unappetizing. Coarseness is a chief defect in American cooking, for your food is not served as in London or Paris, but thrown at you in chunks, and when you order either a simple, or expensive, *plat*, it arrives in such Gargantuan proportions that a mere glance at it suffices to allay hunger. On one occasion, only, have I dined well in America, and that was with a millionaire whose *chef* had just arrived from Paris, and who was therefore new to the country.

But although the least fastidious Englishmen generally, (and justly), complain of New York hotels and restaurants, I may say that, in my case, this deficiency was amply atoned for by the many friends I made there, almost as soon as I had set foot on land. I could, of course, have gladly dispensed with the crowd of "newspaper men" who greeted my

arrival; and were readers of our yellow journals in England to visit America for a month or two, I feel convinced that, on returning to their native land, they would subscribe exclusively to *The Times* and *Quarterly Review* for ever after! For the columns of nonsense published in the New York papers about myself, were only equalled by the absurd misstatements which I constantly read on the most important questions of the day. I fancy the craze for interviewing is responsible for the low tone of journalism in the New World. Were this operation restricted to conversations with celebrities, it might be tolerated, but the most insignificant personage has only to call upon an editor, and "claim" that he is about to commit some wild and impossible action, (such as appropriating a European throne, or flying to the planet Mars), and the sorry drivel is promptly published, eagerly read, and even seriously discussed by apparently sane men and women. Thus, a few days after my arrival, some crazy crank, having read of my intended journey, "claimed" that he was about to ride all the way to Paris on one horse, a snow-white quadruped of venerable exterior, purchased out of a travelling circus. For two days, the papers were full of this "explorer," (a clerk in a small hotel), his portrait was widely published, and leading articles were written on the chimerical enterprise and its chances of success. Moreover, the man actually started, accompanied by a brass band, and cheered by an immense crowd,

influenced, as usual, by the hysterical tomfoolery they had read anent this impostor, who, as might have been foreseen, rode quietly back into New York by a different route, and was never seen or heard of again! Yet even the best journals were fooled by this buffoon.

Amongst the many acquaintances I made in New York before my departure for the unknown were Miss Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the well-known authoress, Mr. (now Sir) Gilbert Parker, Richard Mansfield, the tragedian, Commodore Melville (of the ill-fated "Jeannette" expedition), the late Mr. Yerkes (of Twopenny Tube fame), and last but not least, Major Pond, the famous impresario under whose auspices I lectured, a few years later, throughout Canada and the United States. Another international celebrity whom I met was the late Colonel Tom Ochiltree, who, although he took a kindly interest in my venture, expressed his opinion that, on this occasion, I had probably "bitten off more than I could chew," a prophecy which, not long after, was unfortunately fulfilled. Ochiltree was a most amusing fellow, and although his tales of travel savoured of Baron Munchausen, they were vastly entertaining. Some of my readers have perhaps met him in Paris or the continental watering-places—a short, red-haired man, with a comical face more like a pantomime mask than a human countenance, in which a pronounced cast in one eye was the subject of as much amusement to the owner as to his friends. Tom told me that once

as a youth on his father's plantation he was ordered to kill a calf, and the animal, with a rope round its neck, was led forth by a negro. The axe was handed to the young master, who had raised it above his head to strike, when the darkie shouted, "Hold on, Massa Tom, hold on! Is you going to strike where you is looking?" "Of course I am," was the reply. "Then you can hold the calf yourself," cried the other, dropping the rope and hurriedly seeking refuge in an adjoining shed!

I will not enter into details of my first attempt to girdle the earth by land, as full particulars of the journey were published at the time.[1] Besides, it is not a pleasant recollection for two reasons, one being that I failed in my purpose, and the other that, for two months in Alaska, I was unconsciously walking about over unclaimed millions of money. Cormack, the first fortunate prospector, made his lucky strike just five weeks after my expedition had passed on its way northward, within ten miles of the spot. I never even heard of the occurrence until nearly five months later, when I was landed, more dead than alive, by a revenue cutter at San Francisco. When we crossed the gold zone in '96, Dawson City did not exist, and there were less than a hundred white men in the country. The following summer the mushroom city had sprung into being, as if by magic, and they were numbered by thousands.

[1] See *Through the Goldfields of Alaska to Bering Straits*, by the author. Chatto and Windus, London, 1898.

There are, however, some minor events connected with that journey which I have never published, but which may amuse the reader. One was an experience which befell me at Juneau, then the last town in civilization, and the so-called Gateway of Alaska. It was a wild kind of place; chiefly composed of native wigwams and low drinking-saloons, with one small hotel, the resort of miners and "toughs" of the worst class, where I was lucky enough to find one of the few beds in the place. I generally passed my evenings, for company's sake, at one of the saloons aforementioned, and there met a broken-down Englishman, who had drifted here, on the downward path, from a bank in London and a cab-rank in Chicago. B—— evinced great delight at meeting with a compatriot, but celebrated the occasion so recklessly that, towards midnight, he had reached the quarrelsome stage, and I therefore seized the opportunity, while my friend was wrangling with the bar-tender, of making my escape. But I had only just retired to bed, when a loud knock at the door aroused me, and, fearing fire, I hastily opened the former, and there stood my inebriated bar-acquaintance, accompanied by a total (but luckily sober) stranger. The latter, I was given to understand, had been brought to witness an apology tendered by the British exile for his offensive conduct. This I hurriedly accepted, being chiefly anxious to dismiss my unwelcome visitors, when B—— turned towards his silent companion, and looking him up and down with a drunken

stare, inquired "what the d——l he meant by intruding in a gentleman's bedroom." B—— then slammed the door in the man's face, produced a whisky-flask, and announced his intention of "making a night of it"!

This was bad enough, but I did not like the look of that stranger, and, having resolved to see him off the premises, stumbled down the steep stairs in the darkness, to find my surly friend sitting at the bottom with a revolver in his hand. "I've no quarrel with *you!*" said the stranger with a nasal drawl; "it's that sucker upstairs I am going to fix!" After some argument, however, enforced by a five-dollar note, this gentleman reluctantly consented to postpone the ceremony of "pumping lead" into his enemy until the morning, and I gradually edged him into the street and barred him out, which, as he eventually proved to be a confederate of the notorious robber "Soapy Smith,"[1] was perhaps as well. Then I returned to my other guest, to find that he had undressed and appropriated my bed, where he lay snoring peacefully, quite oblivious of any attempts to awaken him. So I slept on the floor, and thus ended my first experience of social life in the wild North-West!

The next morning, while strolling on the quay, I saw, as I thought, B—— walking in front of me, and quickening my pace, I slapped him on the back, and advised him to keep sober in future; but the

[1] Afterwards lynched at Skagway, Alaska.

man turned, and disclosed the astounded features of a local missionary! In a last letter written from Juneau to England, I related this adventure to my old friend Charles Brookfield, the famous playwright and comedian, and, many months after, received the following reply:—

"BEEFSTEAK CLUB,
"*Sept.* 7/'96.

"MY DEAR HARRY,—Your Juneau adventure with the parson recalls one of a similar nature which once happened to me.

"In 1877 I was stalking reindeer in Norway—on the Doverfjeld. One evening, on the crest of a hill, I casually met a young Englishman, with whom I sat down and had a chat. He had run out of whisky, so I gave him a pull from my flask (a capacious Service water-bottle); I had run out of tobacco, so he gave me a fill or two from his roomy pouch. He told me, in course of conversation, that his name was Truman. We shook hands and parted. Ten years later I was staying at Mont Dore in the Puy de Dome. One morning I ascended the Pic de Sancy, and, as I reached the summit, I saw another tourist making his way to the top from the other side. I recognized his figure and gait—it was Truman. I mutely handed him the same flask—he silently passed me his pouch. Then we sat down and laughed at the singular coincidence of our meeting again in a different part of the world in such precisely similar circumstances as before.

"'Depend upon it,' I said, 'this is not our final

encounter. We shall meet again one of these days —on Vesuvius, in Tibet, at the North Pole—who knows where! But we shall meet again.'

"We shook hands and went our ways.

"In 1897 I was snatching a brief holiday in the Alleghany Mountains. One day, as I was nearing a summit, I saw in front of me another climber whose back and way of walking seemed strangely familiar. 'Truman!' I mentally exclaimed. As I came near him he stopped—still without turning —fumbled in a side-pocket, and presently drew forth the counterpart of the tobacco pouch which I had come to associate with Truman and mountain peaks. So I took the cork from my flask (the selfsame Service water-bottle), stole noiselessly behind my fellow-traveller, slapped him heartily on the back, and cried—

"'I'll bet you've run out of whisky again—so take a swig of mine. You *used* to like it, you know.'

"The man turned, and hurled at me a volley of invective. It was not Truman, but a total stranger, and, as it turned out, a total abstainer as well!"

But to return to Alaska. A sparse collection of wooden shanties called "Forty Mile" was the Dawson City of those days, and it seemed strange the other day, when travelling overland from Paris, to eat ices with a party of ladies at an Italian pastry-cook's on the very spot where, on this former occasion, there was only one solitary Indian wigwam, where no food was procurable. Forty Mile "City" consisted

of some dismal log huts on a mudbank, where numerous tree stumps showed the recent origin of this northern mining-camp. Every third hut was a drinking-saloon, and I attended a "ball" at one of these establishments, which was festooned with flags, and had a drinking-bar at one end. A violin and banjo furnished the music, and it was weird to see mud-stained men and their hard-featured partners, circling gravely round to the strains of a familiar valse, in the sickly light shed by a midnight sun. The dancers numbered about a score, and quite that number of dogs had strayed in through the open doorway. These appeared to excite no surprise, until the master of the ceremonies, (in a red flannel jersey) walked round and sprinkled the boards with resin, quite unaware that a hungry cur was greedily devouring the stuff as it fell! Those were rough times on the Yukon, when a steamer was a rare sight on its waters, and the name of "Klondike" had not yet been corrupted from the original one of "Thron-Diuck," an Indian word signifying "Plenty-Fish River."

I experienced only ordinary privations and hardships that summer in Alaska, but can safely say that I have never suffered, mentally or physically, as I did the ensuing autumn, when living with a tribe of Siberian savages on the shores of Béring Straits. Crossing the latter on the American revenue cutter "Bear," I and my companion took up our quarters in a walrus-hide hut, in company with about a score of

filthy and degraded beings, until the frost and snows of winter should render the ground fit for travel, for the endless swamps of Arctic Siberia can only be crossed in a dog or deer sled.

But the "Bear" had scarcely sailed away when I discovered that the chief of the village was a rapacious old scoundrel, who, although he had faithfully promised to provide me with dogs and sleds in the winter, now flatly declined to do so. Under these conditions, the reader may imagine my dismay, for the Government ship could not return until the following summer, and, at this late season, most of the whalers had passed southward out of the Arctic Ocean. We were therefore, virtually, prisoners until the following summer, with the cheerful prospect of being half starved, and perhaps maltreated, by the natives, who seized our outfit and provisions, and provided us in return with a daily meal of disgusting seal or walrus meat.

One of these people spoke a little English, picked up from the whalemen who occasionally call here, and when he told me that no one had ever even attempted a sleigh journey to Anadyrsk, (the nearest Russian post about one thousand miles away) I abandoned all hopes of reaching Paris. When this native added: "Get out of this, or you die!" I quite saw the force of the suggestion, but failed to see how it was to be carried out. Our only hope lay in some passing vessel, but all had probably sailed south by now, for it was late in September, and

every day the roar of ice, drifting down from the north, was becoming more painfully distinct. There was nothing, therefore, to be done but to hoist our small Union Jack on an old whale-rib upon the beach, and hope for the best.

And, day by day, the light waned, as the brief Arctic summer was gradually merged into the long Polar night. Our greatest peril was when these people held a drink orgie, which occurred, on an average, about once a week. On these occasions, our only safeguard was that the poorer portion of the community could not afford to buy whisky, and these men protected us from the attacks of their drunken neighbours. The women, too, always warned us when an orgie was about to take place, and we concealed ourselves amongst them until it was over. The whisky was fiery, maddening stuff, obtained from the whalers, which I tasted once, and it burnt my throat like vitriol. The terror of the wretched women and children during these feasts was pitiful to witness. We often saw men reeling about the settlement, streaming with blood from knife or bullet wounds, but there was no restraint of any kind, and the offenders went unpunished. A woman killed her child while we were there, but nothing was done.

Under less painful circumstances, I should have made a careful study of the manners and customs of this unique race, for we were the only Europeans who had ever lived with them for any length of

time. Some of their habits were so unspeakably foul and disgusting, that I should imagine the Tchuktchi is about the nearest human relative of the ape in existence. The footnote,[1] which I am compelled, for obvious reasons, to publish in the Latin language, furnishes only two instances (out of many similar ones) which came under my notice while living in that dark, fetid hut, with its revolting odour of tainted walrus meat, seal oil, and other abominations.

The reader may naturally ask, "How do these people exist?" Well, the principle of "the survival of the fittest" was clearly shown in this dreary settlement, for the poorer class suffered as much there as in the slums of London or New York. Koari, the chief, and a few others, had collected some bare necessaries of life by trading furs and whalebone with the San Francisco whalers, receiving in exchange flour, rifles, and whisky, but the poorer natives could afford none of these luxuries. They dragged out a miserable existence by watching for

[1] Tchuktii pudorem omnino ignorant: promiscui concubitus: neque sororis filiæve incesta vitant. Quin etiam ad frigus a se defendendum, corpora humano lotio lavare solent. Quo hoc facilius faciant, vas ingens, quotidiano incolarum usu replendum, in casa cujusque servatur, unde odor (cum multis aliis permixtus) exit taeterrimus. Sed ut mores tam obscenos penitus intelligas, rem fœdissimam tibi enarrabo. Forte in vico pererrabam: commissatione facta, ebriores incolæ. Itaque homo quidam quum e domo se projecisset, ante oculos meos in terram eumuit. Quo viso, mulier, qua in vicina casa habitabat, quum præceps se proripuisset, ejecta in manus correpta voracissime edebat scilicet ut potum, quem Caledonii "whisky" appellant, degustare posset. Multa alia fœdissima narrare possum; hoc tamen mihi in præsentia satis videtur.

walrus, and lived, so far as I could see, largely upon seaweed. One day I threw a piece of putrid seal meat to the dogs, and a starving wretch, who happened to be standing by, rushed forward and devoured the filthy morsel before the animal could reach it.

We were landed at this place early in September, and, by the first of October, minutes had become hours—hours days! Winter had already set in with a furious north-easter, accompanied by driving snow, and the shore ice had come to stay. There was now little to hope for, and most of our time was spent in gazing anxiously seaward for the sail which never came. About this time my troubles were increased by a painful skin eruption, which covered my entire body. I suffered from it for some time, until the irritation became so intense that I could get no rest, and honestly believe that another month of this torture would have rendered me insane. I ascribed the complaint to poor blood, arising from filthy and insufficient food, but it arose from a very different cause, and was a malady which I need not mention, but which arose from wearing Tchuktchi garments which had already been worn. And if the days were dreary, the nights were infinitely more so, as I lay awake, longing for the brief hours of daylight, when the movement of men, the sound of human voices, were, at any rate, something to look at and listen to. Anything was better than to lie awake in the darkness, listening to the wind and dull roar of the ice

every hour immuring us more securely in this Arctic prison.

Never shall I forget the eighteenth day of October —the blessed day of deliverance! A furious gale had been raging since dawn, and even the natives feared to face it. Only that morning I had remarked to my companion, "Well, it's all over now—we are done for." Shortly afterwards, one of the walrus watchers, who are out in all weathers, dashed into the hut, his eyes ablaze: "A whaler!" he yelled, and rushed out again to the beach, where an excited group was already watching a small steamer, as she staggered along under steam and close-reefed top-sails. Before us stretched a vast expanse of silvery ice, divided by a blue-black strip of open water from the sullen, lurid sky. The roaring of the gale, and deafening clamour caused by floes crashing against each other, in a mountainous sea, were truly appalling. For a time it looked as though the ship would hold on her course due south, but when I saw the Stars and Stripes run up, I knew that our rag of a Union Jack had been seen and that we should not be left to die. Yet safety lay only in the open sea. The skipper of that whaler knew that he was risking the lives of all on board, by lingering near this ice-trap. But he never wavered, and anchored his ship about two miles offshore, where open sea made it possible to launch a boat. But the surf was terrific, and the first *baidara*[1] was caught up by a breaker and dashed to

[1] A large boat made of walrus-hides.

pieces; though a second was safely launched, and bravely put to sea. The chief never left me for an instant. "You no go," he kept repeating; "big water, you drown." This looked extremely likely, but I knew that my old friend's anxiety was not on my account, but his own. He probably had visions (since realized) of unpleasant reckonings with the "Bear"! Anyhow, we managed to embark on the third *baidara* launched, jumping in when she was on the crest of a huge roller, and on that occasion, only, was I thankful that the Tchuktchis love whisky. For had it not been to obtain alcohol, not a man would have ventured out in such a hurricane!

Thus were we rescued from an almost certain and lingering death by Captain Joseph Whiteside, and the New Bedford whaler "Belvedere."[1] Everything on board was very rough and primitive, and the

[1] The following letter, from the Surgeon of the U.S.S. "Bear," was written about a month after this occurrence.

"To the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette.*

"SIR,—Surmising that the unexpected return of Mr. Harry de Windt, your special correspondent, may be as much a disappointment to you as it most assuredly is to him, I think it is only fair to state some facts connected with his condition, and inform you that, had he failed to make his escape from Siberia, you would be minus a member of your staff.

"On his arrival here I could not recognize the man we landed in Siberia some eight weeks ago. His condition was truly pitiable, for he was suffering much mentally, and a painful skin disease covered his entire body. After careful treatment, he is now in a more presentable condition, and a happier frame of mind. Feeling that he deserved this statement at my hands,

"I am, truly yours,

"ROBERT LYALL,

"Surgeon, U.S.S. 'Bear.

"U.S.S. 'Bear,' San Francisco,
"*Nov.* 6."

grimy little vessel reeked of soot and blubber, but she seemed a roomy and luxurious yacht after all we had gone through. For three days we blundered about in the ice, which occasionally made the old craft crack ominously, but eventually we struck open water and ran into calmer weather, after the usual buffeting in that nest of storms—Béring Sea.

The skipper was a character—an Irish giant, naturalized in America, but full of the quaint, dry humour of his native land, which lightened many a wearisome hour on board. That Whiteside's many escapes from death in the Arctic had made him quite indifferent to the grim, grey stranger, was shown by the following anecdote. One fine, warm day, nearing the Aleutian Islands, I was sunning myself on the tiny poop, while seated on a long deep deal box, (which, securely lashed to the bulwarks, contained, as I thought, whaling gear,) when I became conscious of a sickly smell, yet one so pungent that it overpowered the chronic fumes of boiling blubber. I asked Whiteside, who was at the wheel, what it could be, but the frost-bitten mariner, case-hardened by a long and varied experience of evil odours, sniffed violently, yet could give no explanation of the mystery. But presently it dawned upon him. "Oh, yes," he cried, as if struck by a sudden thought, "that must be our mate. He was killed by a whale up north, and asked to be taken to 'Frisco. So I put him in that box you're sitting on, and I guess the ice is giving out in this warm weather!"

I remained for some weeks in San Francisco to recover from the effects of my stay in the Arctic, and could not have found a more delightful place for convalescence. The pleasant climate, cosmopolitan life, and natural beauty of the city's surroundings, were indeed a contrast to sordid and unattractive New York. I think the Palace Hotel, (since destroyed in the earthquake) was then the most luxurious in the States, with, perhaps, the exception of the "Ponce de Leon" at St. Augustine, in Florida, an establishment run on such extravagant lines, that the following story is not, I believe, exaggerated. A magnificent orchestra performed every evening in the hotel dining-room, but on one occasion, out of season, the house was so empty that the manager despatched the following wire to the head offices of the Company: "Only one guest, but orchestra of thirty. What shall I do?" And the prompt reply came: "If guest dissatisfied engage six more musicians"!

One met the most varied and interesting types of humanity in the gilded bar-room of the "Palace," which, by the way, had never been closed for an hour since the building had been in existence. The said apartment was generally crowded till the small hours with all sorts and conditions of men, and one morning, long after midnight, I was presented to an official known as the District Attorney, who, hearing that I was interested in criminology, offered to show me a notorious assassin—one Durrant—who had murdered two young girls under peculiarly atrocious circum-

stances, and who was then lying under sentence of death. "When may I go?" I asked. "Right now," was the rather startling reply, and the next moment I was on my way to the city gaol to call on a murderer at one o'clock in the morning. Such a thing would have seemed almost incredible in any other place, but I had long ceased to wonder at anything in San Francisco, although the sight of the condemned cell, ablaze with electric light, hung with costly engravings, and heavy with the scent of hothouse flowers, sent by the convict's female admirers, seemed more like a dream than reality. The night was sultry, and Durrant, a thin, cadaverous youth, was in shirt-sleeves, playing cards with a fellow-murderer, while both were smoking cigarettes and drinking Lager beer.

"Hello, Durrant!" cried the District Attorney, proffering his hand. "Here is a visitor—Mr. de Windt."

Durrant rose from his seat and shook me warmly by the hand. "Very glad to see *you*, sir," he said. "Read all about your journey. Guess I don't shake with you though, Mr. District Attorney; you gave me a pretty hard indictment!" But they both laughed heartily at the joke, and we sat down, and after a few minutes' conversation on ordinary subjects, took our departure. Durrant had then lain for *two years* under sentence of death, and, as we left the gaol, I expressed a hope that, for humanity's sake, he would shortly either be executed

or reprieved. "Well, I guess it will be so," said the District Attorney cheerfully; "our young friend will hang on Thursday next." And he did.

Another celebrity whose acquaintance I made here, (and of whose personal strength I retain a vivid recollection), was Bob Fitzsimmons, the prize-fighter. The morning after his famous fight, (which I witnessed) with Sharkey, I called upon the pugilist to obtain particulars of an alleged foul on his part which had suddenly ended the combat, partly by reason of the fact that one of the referees produced a "gun" to enforce his decision, thus creating a stampede amongst the audience. Fitzsimmons was the quietest, pleasantest-mannered fellow imaginable, and received me most cordially, although surrounded in a "sporting saloon" by a rather rowdy crowd of partisans. But being an Englishman Fitz was glad to furnish me with full details for the *Pall Mall Gazette* of what he called the "fake" which had cheated him out of his laurels. "Just step aside and I will show you how it was," said he, and then practically demonstrated the blow he had struck his antagonist with such force and precision, that it sent me flying out of the open doorway, of course quite unintentionally on the part of "the striker." Fitz was, I could see, really sorry, and most profuse in his apologies. "You must be very light," said he, with a puzzled look. "Why I hardly touched you." Nevertheless I felt (and bore) the marks of that playful little "touch" for days afterwards.

There is probably no city in the world where all classes meet on such free-and-easy terms as San Francisco, a social state of affairs which has probably descended from the old mining days, and this haphazard equality is seldom appreciated by the British tourist, who passes through here on his cut-and-dried tour "round the world." I remember once sitting in the entrance hall of the "Palace," with a well-known racing man and privileged buffoon known as "White Hat Macarthy," when a gorgeously apparelled young Englishman, just landed from a Japan liner, walked up to the office to register, while his private servant respectfully looked on. When they had disappeared to inspect their apartments, Macarthy strolled up to the desk, glanced at the register book, and while the clerk's back was turned, inscribed something on its open page, and, waving me a farewell, left the hotel. Curiosity impelled me to inspect the volume, and this is what I read:—

"The Honble. Archibald James FitzAlan, and Valet," while underneath it, in my racing friend's somewhat cramped and shaky handwriting, appeared the following entry: "Mr. 'White Hat' Macarthy —*and 'Valise'*!"

On the day that this occurred I was strolling down Market Street, when a man passed me whose features were strangely familiar, and yet I could not, for the life of me, recall where I had seen that tall, well-groomed figure before. As we met, the stranger paused as if to speak, then, apparently changing his

mind, walked hurriedly on, and was soon lost in the crowd. That evening I went to Monterey, a few hours by rail from the Golden Gate, for the week-end, and retired to bed still haunted by the face I had seen that day. And the next morning, after a late breakfast, I stretched myself on a long chair in the sunlit verandah, and unfolded the *San Francisco Examiner*, a Sunday edition with profuse illustrations, still lazily endeavouring to solve the puzzle. The mystery was now increased by the fact that the outer page of the journal was entirely occupied by the portrait of the mysterious stranger, but then, although the name beneath it, "Comte de Toulouse Lautrec," told me nothing (for I was then unaware of the French *alias*), a sudden flash of memory revealed the truth. For it was no other than my old friend, Lavine, the arch-swindler, who simpered at me from the flimsy page, another portion of which informed me that this plausible scoundrel was about to add another to his long list of victims. The article ran thus:—

"The Comte de Toulouse Lautrec, who will shortly lead the daughter of one of our wealthiest citizens to the altar, has had an adventurous career. There are few men who can boast of having escaped from Siberia, but the Count has lately accomplished that almost superhuman feat. A few years since this distinguished French nobleman was sent without trial to the quicksilver mines for alleged participation in a political plot. His harrowing experiences

would fill a three-volume novel, and we are glad to say that they will shortly be published in book form. The world will thus be enlightened as to the infamies that are still perpetrated in the name of justice in the Tsar's great prison-house. The Count informs us that a heavy claim will shortly be made by his Government for this outrage on the scion of one of the noblest houses in France. All lovers of fair play will warmly congratulate this gallant Frenchman on his escape from the clutches of the Bear, and on his approaching nuptials with one of the fairest daughters of California."

But I am glad to be able to add that this villainous plot at least was frustrated. Whether Lavine feared that unpleasant disclosures would follow our meeting, I know not, but at any rate the Russian Consul was able, with some difficulty, to convince the "wealthy citizen" that his prospective son-in-law was nothing more than a criminal convict, who had been discharged, in the usual manner, after serving a sentence for fraud in Siberia. Thereupon, with his customary tact and discretion, Lavine vanished into thin air, and the incident ended.

But this undefeated impostor is still on the war-path, and in 1902 the following extract appeared in an American paper, which showed that Lavine's matrimonial fiasco had only whetted his appetite for the achievement of further rascalities:—

"Leipzig, March 12.—'We have got you, no

matter how,' said the Chief Justice of the German Supreme Court to Nicholas Lavine, who claims to be an American citizen and undoubtedly is a gifted international swindler. Since December, 1901, when he left Baltimore, Lavine has worked most of the cities of the Continent, getting rid of Confederate money in large blocks, strewing checks on New York and San Francisco banks all round him, and selling coupons of American bonds that never paid dividends. Part of the time he called himself Count Toulouse Lautrec, and tried hard to exchange that bogus title for a fortune or two by wedding several rich American girls. But the German police have at last nabbed this arch impostor, although Nicholas sought, as usual, to break the verdict by a plea of technicalities."

My last information regarding this modern Cagliostro is only a few months old, for in May of this year (1908) we find him at Pau, and as busy as ever, as the following report, taken from a London newspaper, will show:—

"The trial of M. de Lavine on the charge of obtaining money under false pretences was resumed at Pau on Saturday.

"The prisoner, who declares that his real name is Comte de Toulouse Lautrec, has set up an ingenious defence, and says that he has been mistaken for his cousin, and that M. Bertillon, of the anthropometrical bureau, has fallen a victim to this error on the part of the police. It is his cousin, he says, who bears

the responsibility of the convictions now saddled upon him. Where this cousin is, or whether he is a myth, has not been divulged.

"Lavine makes no secret of the fact that he is an Anarchist and Nihilist, though he ironically informed the Court that it would find no explosives in the box containing his papers. He declares that he was wounded at Plevna and Santiago de Cuba, but when the Court directed two doctors to examine the wounds, they reported that, though there were scars to be seen, they were probably not received in action. The remainder of the sitting was sensational, for the prisoner broke out into a violent diatribe against Dr. Speakman, representing the American authorities, and Mr. Evans, of the local English bank, who were instrumental in having him arrested."

How this trial ended I do not know, but I assume that its hero received the usual term of imprisonment, and served it with his customary grace and cheerfulness. And here we must leave our shifty friend for the present, although the reader of police reports will probably hear of him again. Lavine was undoubtedly the most talented and attractive malefactor I have ever come across. Shall we ever meet again? As old "Demetrius" used to say in the *Red Lamp*, "I wonder!"

LIBRARY

XVII

THE KLONDIKE BOOM—RACING IN FRANCE—COMIC-OPERA CONSPIRATORS—A FAMILIAR FACE IN AYLESBURY PRISON

I FOUND on my return to England that every one had gone crazy on the subject of Klondike gold, and I had not been at home twenty-four hours before my rooms were besieged by Press representatives, eager for copy on the burning question of the hour. For although I had not been present when Cormack made his now famous discovery, I was, at that time, probably the only Englishman in London actually acquainted with the new Eldorado, who, although he could not tell people how to find the treasure, could at any rate accurately describe the place where it lay concealed. So it came to pass that one morning I awoke, (like Lord Byron) to "find myself famous," through the medium of an "interview" in every newspaper in London (to say nothing of the provinces). Inquiries then poured in daily from all parts of the United Kingdom, and even the Continent, in such overwhelming numbers that I was compelled to engage a secretary and charge five shillings for every reply—a fee designed, at the outset, to obviate the

nuisance, but one which realized, in a short time, a very handsome total. For all sorts of men were keen to be off and try their luck; officers of both services, clerks, lawyers, doctors, shopkeepers, and last, but not least, loafers, and some of their letters were most amusing. One man wanted to know whether the climate would suit an invalid wife, another if he could ride over the Chilkoot Pass (which we could barely negotiate on foot) on a bicyle, and so on. But the climax was reached when a gentleman from Dublin proposed to travel to the goldfields in a gigantic balloon, carrying fifty passengers with him to defray the cost of the expedition! But there was no limit to the extravagant projects of these "embryo" prospectors, most of whom were business men, without the remotest idea of the conditions awaiting them in that ice-bound region: the appalling journey, the intense cold of winter, the mosquitoes and sickness in summer, and semi-starvation at all times. The long death-roll in the spring of 1898 shows that thousands must have set out from a comfortable home, and perished in agony during the first frenzied rush, into that dark silent land of ice and gold.

Although I did not derive any monetary advantage from the Alaskan gold strike itself, I certainly benefited by it indirectly, for my book on the journey to Béring Straits[1] had an enormous sale, being

[1] *Through the Gold Fields of Alaska to Béring Straits*, by the author. Chatto and Windus, London. Harper Bros., New York.

published simultaneously in London and New York, and purchased more as a guide-book than for any literary merit it may have possessed. Then came my first appearance as a lecturer (under the auspices of my good friend Gerald Christy), and, one eventful night, I addressed a crowded audience at the Imperial Institute, presided over by the Duke of Argyll, (then Marquis of Lorne), who, in a speech at the close of the proceedings, expressed a hope that I should return from Klondike (which I then purposed revisiting) a "multi-millionaire!" But this desirable consummation never came off, for fate (in the shape of the lady who now bears my name) suddenly intervened. So I went to the altar instead of to the Yukon, a modified itinerary which I have never had cause to regret. Some say that explorers have no right to marry, but my case proves at least one exception to this rule, for had it not been for the wise counsel and practical assistance afforded by my wife, my greatest journey (from Paris to New York) would never have been accomplished. I can safely say, therefore, that my marriage is the pleasantest recollection which I retain of the "Klondike-boom" era, for my only commercial enterprise connected therewith met with dire failure. Having formed a syndicate, and purchased five claims on the valuable "El Dorado" Creek, a "De Windt Exploration Company" was formed, and the said properties were offered to the British public at £100,000, £50,000 being retained for working capital. But only £70,000 were sub-

scribed, and the Board refused to go to allotment, although numerous companies, (and some of them genuine) were then being launched on an absurdly small financial basis. What the public, (and I), lost for the sake of £30,000, may now be calculated by the fact that three of the claims of which I held the option afterwards realized *over two millions sterling*. Let me clearly state that I do not, for one moment, blame the Chairman or Board of my company for the disaster. I simply regard the whole thing as a slice of bad luck, much on a par with my "Lang Syne" and "Grand National" fiasco, though unfortunately on a larger scale.

Paris now became my permanent home, and we started our *ménage*, (or as an Englishman of my acquaintance once called it, "manége"!) in a pretty little sunlit apartment of the Avenue Kléber, where, for a couple of years, I rested from my labours, (so far as exploration was concerned), though resolved, some day, to make another attempt to accomplish the difficult expedition in which I had failed. During this period of inactivity, I wrote a book of short stories,[1] and corresponded for several newspapers in England, also contributing a weekly Parisian letter to the *Phœnix*, a society journal started by my friend the late James Davis, (Owen Hall), which had but a short-lived existence. In summer-time my leisure hours were generally passed at the various

[1] *True Tales of Travel and Adventure*, by Harry de Windt. Chatto and Windus, London.

race meetings around Paris, where one can enjoy sport in comfort, not to say luxury, although across the Channel it must be witnessed, save in very few instances, under conditions of supreme discomfort. There is no more depressing sight, in my eyes, than an English racecourse seen on a fine day, while Auteuil or Maisons Lafitte can look cheerful even on a dull and rainy one. Moreover, in France you are not expected to take 3 to 1 about a 20 to 1 chance, which is cheerfully done every day in our country. A *Pari-Mutuel* in England would undoubtedly benefit the large army of backers, and I can never understand why it has not been established long ago. At the meetings around Paris it is always better to speculate in small sums, on several outsiders in a race, than to stake the same amount on a first or second favourite, for, by the former system, enormous odds are frequently landed. My stake was generally limited to ten francs on a horse, and never more than £6 on one race, and yet in two seasons I netted over £500. To give an instance of one lucky win, I was present at Longchamps when "Pretty Polly" came over with a flourish of trumpets and a legion of English turfites, convinced that the "Prix du Conseil Municipal" was at their champion's mercy. Consequently, the thousands of pounds carried by the mare, not only of English, but French, money at the *Mutuels*, brought her to absurdly short odds, and her few competitors to proportionately long

ones. Just before the race I met an old friend, (that well-known speculator Walter Blake), who asked me what I had backed. "Presto II" was my reply, and Walter fairly gasped with surprise. "You ought to be locked up!" was all he said. But the laugh was on my side when, shortly afterwards, the despised outsider romped in, and I netted, (with a stake of 80 francs, or £3 3s. 4d.), the sum of £284! On another occasion, at Saint-Cloud, my wife backed a mare called "La Siberienne," chiefly because of her name, and was paid 1460 francs (nearly £60) for her modest ten-franc piece!

A sensational event in the summer of '97 was the duel of Prince Henry of Orleans with the Count of Turin, and as I was honoured with the former's friendship, and the Count was a noted swordsman, I felt some anxiety until the result was announced by Raoul Mourrichon, another friend of mine, who acted as second. The Prince had bad luck, for, while delivering a clever thrust, the point of his weapon was arrested by a trouser button, and the Italian simultaneously inflicted a nasty wound on his opponent, from which the latter happily recovered after a few days' treatment and rest. This was a serious combat, for Prince Henry told us he fully intended killing his man, although there is no doubt that most French duels involve less peril than a ride in a motor-car, especially when pistols are the chosen weapons. I could never understand how, in nine cases out of ten, both combatants almost

invariably escaped injury, until one day a friend who had officiated in an *affaire d'honneur* explained the mystery. "In most cases," he said, "the bullets (which are provided by the seconds) are made of some soft and harmless substance," and he showed me one of these innocent missiles, hundreds of which are sold yearly by a well-known Parisian fencing master. The principals are, of course, supposed to know nothing about the precautions taken for their safety, and in their case, therefore, honour is duly satisfied! This fully explains why, during the many years I have lived in France, I can only recall one fatal termination to a duel, whereas in Russia and Germany I have heard of many deaths.

There never lived a more simple-minded, lovable being than Prince Henry of Orleans, and I am convinced that, had his life been spared, he might one day have been ruler of France, for his talents and attainments were far above the average, and he had legions of devoted adherents in every class of society. No man ever accomplished better work during the brief years he devoted to exploration, and no city drudge ever worked harder than did this illustrious young Royalist, in the poorly furnished little bedroom I often visited in the Rue Jean Goujon. The house was his father's, the Duc de Chartres, and stood within a few yards of the spot where his kinswoman, the Duchesse d'Alençon, perished in the charity bazaar catastrophe. If the Prince had a fault, it was that he erred on the side of good nature,

and was therefore often surrounded, when in Paris, by people whose society he would have done well to avoid, both for political and social reasons. I was sometimes invited to the banquets given in his honour by these *bourgeois*, but wealthy, acquaintances, and, from a humorous point of view, they were certainly well worth attending. A well-known wine merchant, a stout, red-faced little man, who wore his hair and beard *à la Henri IV*, and posed as an ardent Royalist, was a frequent host whose hospitality, (for some cryptic reason) was dispensed with the utmost reserve and secrecy. Everything savoured of conspiracy, and even the invitation "to meet the King" was furtively whispered, and seldom consigned to notepaper. We generally foregathered at Voisin's, in a private room, and discussed a *déjeuner*, which began with oysters at noon, and ended in bumpers of a curious old Cognac, drunk *à la Santé du Roi!* at six p.m. Curtains would be closely drawn, and waiters dismissed just before this toast, while a sharp look out was maintained for imaginary spies lurking outside in the passage. Then we would all take solemn leave of the pretender, and depart, one by one, from the restaurant by different doors. This was the invariable custom in order not to excite the suspicions of the police, who, I am convinced, were supremely indifferent to all these proceedings! And no one derived more amusement from all this tomfoolery than the Prince himself, although he managed, with admirable self-

control, to maintain his gravity. But Prince Henry was a systematic worker, and could only occasionally find time to attend these entertainments, which no doubt they were, so far as he was concerned, in every sense of the word!

Another friend and frequent associate of Prince Henry was the Comte de V——, a typical *Boulevardier*, whose sixty years were cunningly concealed by art and cosmetics. De V—— had once been in the Consular service, where his caustic wit and powers of repartee had stood him in good stead. A story is told that many years ago, when stationed at Moscow, he presided over a public dinner given by some French tradesmen, and one of the latter, a tailor, taking offence at certain remarks made by De V—— in an after-dinner speech, sent his seconds to the Consulate the following morning. "Certainly I will meet your friend," said De V——; "but you must give me time, for he has choice of weapons, and, being a tailor, will of course select a pair of shears, which I have yet to learn the use of!"

De V—— was educated at Stonyhurst, and was really very fond of England and the English, although, in the presence of his countrymen, he generally affected an implacable hatred for *la perfide Albion*. This was especially noticeable during the Boer War, and one day when President Kruger made his triumphant entry into Paris, and some of us were witnessing the event from a club window on the boulevards,

the little man became almost rude and offensive. "*Quel noble vieillard!*" he cried excitedly, waving his hat as the stolid-faced "Oom Paul" drove through the surging crowds. "*Quelle physiognomie heroïque! Et dire que ces sales Anglais*"—but here some one warned him of the presence of one, and he prudently lowered his voice.

Kruger stayed in the Rue Scribe, where De V——'s apartment was also situated, and for three days the street was blocked by thousands of people. The next day at the club, I again met the ex-Consul, but this time he was sitting alone over a late breakfast and apparently fuming with rage and indignation. "Well, have you seen Kruger to-day?" I asked quite innocently, and was therefore almost startled by the torrent of invective the question called forth. "*Oh! le vieux singe!*" cried my friend, shaking his fist in impotent fury: "*Ce n'est pas un homme, ça. C'est une charogne. Il n'y a même pas moyen de rentrer chez soi, ou de circuler parmi cette foule d'imbéciles! Non, écoutez, si nous ne sommes pas crétins—nous autres Français!*"

Nevertheless, English residents in Paris had anything but a pleasant time of it during the South African Campaign, and no English lady could walk out alone, even in the aristocratic quarter surrounding the Arc de Triomphe, without the fear of being insulted by some patriotic *voyou*. But, one day, while strolling in the Avenue Kléber, I got my revenge when the favourite epithet of *Sacré*

Anglais was hurled at me by a white-bloused workman. For, although my appearance may not exactly suggest a foreign origin, my French accent is, as a matter of course, absolutely pure. When, therefore, I walked up to this son of toil, and told him what I thought of him in the choicest local Billingsgate, (with which I am also fairly conversant), he could only gape with surprise, and with a muttered "*Pardon, Monsieur!*" slink away down a side street.

Amongst the innovations which have taken place in Paris during my lifetime is the popular institution known as the "American Bar," where so many Frenchmen of the upper class now discuss their *apéritif* in preference to taking it at a club or *café*. The "Chatham," in the Rue Daunou, was the most amusing and exclusive of these establishments, and therefore a favourite rendezvous of English visitors during the "Green-hour," for Signor Mitta, better known as "Johnnie," the little Italian bar-tender (now a world-renowned celebrity), always had a fund of the latest information of a political, social, and sporting nature. An inner and secluded apartment was the favourite resort of the Royalist element, of which Prince Henry was the head, and I have heard many a daring, but futile, plot to overthrow the Republican Government hatched within its walls. Here would often come De Sagan and De Biré; also La Grené, De Perthuis, Mourrichon, and other Knights of the White Carnation, including the loyal, but misguided, gentleman who bonneted

President Loubet at Longchamps. This heroic deed, however, was only acclaimed by the jewellers of the Rue de la Paix, who sold thousands of little gold trinkets, in the shape of a crushed silk hat, for months afterwards. And to lovers of sport, especially, the Chatham Bar was a favourite resort on fine summer mornings before racing, when one could always find a "coterie" of the most renowned trainers on the French Turf anticipating the day's sport over a cocktail. Here would assemble the Carters, Percy Woodland, Denman, Bob Ruddock, W. Sweeper, and last, but not least, Willy Pratt, who, as a jockey, steered four "Grand Prix" winners to victory, and worthily sustained the family fame previously rendered world-wide by his distinguished uncle, Fred Archer. It may be the effect of a brighter climate, or constant association with the frivolous Gallic race, but I have always found the English trainer resident in France infinitely more agreeable and amusing than his prototype in England. And I never know why, unless a gloomy, furtive manner, downcast eyes, and curt monosyllables are supposed to indicate innate shrewdness and perception, which is by no means always the case!

Anyway, in those days, (and even now, for aught I know) everybody of any account "looked in" at the "Chatham" of an afternoon. Even poor André, the aeronaut, was seen there one day before his imprudent but glorious flight into the next world, and this reminds me of a rather amusing story which

was told of him in Paris just before his departure for Spitzbergen. Like many explorers, André could not bear to be "drawn" anent his projects, and at a banquet given in his honour, a French lady sitting beside him continually plied him with foolish questions. "But how will you know when you have actually crossed the North Pole?" she asked as a parting shot. "Oh, that is very simple, madame," testily answered the Swede; "the north wind will become a south one!"

Even Paris can be bleak and comfortless at Christmas time, and San Remo was our home during a couple of winters—for the Italian Riviera is, to my mind, infinitely more agreeable, though perhaps not so gay, as the French Littoral. We purchased a villa on the outskirts of the town, amongst grey olive groves and bright carnation fields, (with the blue and sparkling sea for a background), where we could sit all day, in a sunny garden, throughout the winter months, lazing and pitying our friends in cold and gloomy England. The ubiquitous Teuton is, perhaps, rather too fond of San Remo, but otherwise the place is delightful, without the late hours and feverish unrest of Nice and Monte Carlo. And the walks and drives around are numberless—to Bussana, for instance, a hill-set town destroyed in the earthquake of '87, when many perished, and where some of the houses are still standing just as the terrified survivors left them. The silent streets of this modern Pompeii resemble a city of the dead, and towards nightfall, I may add, are

better avoided. Another lovely ride was to the mountain shrine of San Romolo, and thence to the summit of Monte Bignone, whence the eye may survey the coast from the Esterelles to Spezzia, and even, on a clear day, catch a faint glimpse of Corsica. Then there was Ceriana, a quaint old town of historical renown, Taggia, with its violet gardens, and Colla, the pretty vine-trellised, red-roofed village that lies like a saddle across the wooded hill to the west of San Remo—than which, in my opinion, no pleasanter winter resort exists throughout the length and breadth of Europe.

In the midsummer of '99 I visited Finland for a London journal—starting in from Petersburg and travelling around the Gulf of Bothnia into Sweden—a delightful trip and one which I can heartily commend to the reader in search of beautiful scenery, pure air, and novelty combined with cheapness. I once imagined that the Grand Duchy was a bleak and barren land, and was therefore agreeably surprised to find a country dotted with prosperous and progressive towns, and far more up-to-date than Russia in its appreciation of hotels, schools, telephones, and other blessings of modern civilization. At Helsingfors, for instance, I could telephone to any part of Finland—even Uleaborg at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, and railways now take you almost everywhere. The Finns are a kindly people (so long as you don't talk Russian!), and their country is a Paradise for the angler or cyclist—

especially the former, for the fishing is the best (and cheapest) in Europe. And I was received, even in the smallest villages, with free and lavish hospitality, although at that time Englishmen were not in favour, the Finns being, almost to a man, Pro-Boers.

I got any amount of sport, and on one of the rivers came across an English friend of mine, B——, who, with his wife and sister-in-law, were staying at a village famous for its excellent sport and cosy inn. B—— was an enthusiastic fisherman, and, at the same time, the most absent-minded being I have ever known. An example of this was shown one evening, as we sat smoking over the fire at the close of a hard day. Mrs. B—— had just received a letter from England, announcing that her niece had presented her husband with a son and heir. "Only imagine, my dear!" she remarked to her sister-in-law, in allusion to the new arrival; "it actually weighs five pounds!" "Five pounds!" murmured B——, drowsily gazing into the embers, and with his mind running, as usual, on his favourite pastime. "Well, that is no good; I should have put it back again!" My journey from Russia to Stockholm occupied about six weeks,[1] and I was heartily sorry when it ended. A progressive and enlightened little nation, a people inspired with ardent patriotism and loyalty towards the Tsar (though not to the Russian Bureaucracy) —such is Finland, such are the Finns.

I returned to Paris viâ London, where I remained

[1] *Finland as it is*, by the author. John Murray, Albemarle Street, London.

a few days, and took the opportunity of obtaining permission from the Home Office to visit the female prison at Aylesbury. This privilege having then only once been granted to a male visitor, I will, therefore, briefly describe the establishment where the incarceration of Mrs. Maybrick once aroused so much dissent on both sides of the Atlantic. The exterior of Aylesbury Prison is less suggestive of the latter than of some peaceful convent set in the fairest part of Buckinghamshire. A peal at the bell brought, not the usual surly janitor, but a benevolent old gentleman in spectacles, who informed me that, although in uniform, he was not a warder, there being no male officials at Aylesbury. The Governor, a middle-aged, pleasant-mannered medical man, accompanied me round the prison, also a couple of buxom, rosy-faced wardresses in neat brown serge.

Otherwise, Aylesbury is just like any other English prison. There is the same general impression of light and air, whitewash and bright steel. But I could conceive how even the excessive cleanliness and monotony must jar on a young and nervous woman of gentle birth. Take the daily diet, for instance: butcher's meat, coarse and greasy, four days in the week; on the others canned food, watery soup, and suet pudding. What a menu after the dainty, appetizing meals of upper social life! And the grotesque costume: a hideous cap and thick, shapeless blue serge, freely splashed with broad-

arrows! Up at 6 a.m. in summer and winter, to clean and scrub the bare, comfortless cell; work, meals, and exercise at stated hours, and bed at 7 p.m., when those in freedom are only preparing to enjoy their evening. In summer the hours of enforced wakefulness, in a twilit, uncurtained cell, till the tardy darkness brings rest, is of itself a severe (and surely unnecessary) punishment.

But I witnessed one incident which, though trivial in itself, seemed to bring a gleam of sunshine into that silent little world of sin and suffering. It occurred in a workshop where a score of women were employed, and the click of sewing-machines was deafening. "What is the matter?" inquired the Governor as he entered, and noticed that something unusual had taken place. "Please, sir, it is Harper's bird," replied a wardress confusedly; "it has got out into the yard." "Harper's bird, eh?" said the good Doctor, with a twinkle in his eye, which was dimly reflected in the pale, eager face of the convict. "Well, why does not Harper go and catch it again?" And the poor girl, quick as thought, and with a grateful glance at the speaker, rushed out of doors, and presently returned with her pet, a common sparrow, which she had tended and trained to follow her like a dog!

Nevertheless, every face I looked into here bore the characteristic look of fear and unrest always engendered by long captivity, and if the poorer classes suffer, what must imprisonment mean to those of

refinement and education? I caught sight here of a young and pretty woman whom I had last seen in her luxurious home in the Far East, and whose death sentence had been commuted to one of life-long imprisonment. Only six years had elapsed since we met in freedom, but the once lithe and graceful figure now appeared almost grotesque, and the comely features were almost as lined and care-worn as those of an elderly woman.

Nevertheless, as I drove away, and the bright lights of the prison faded in the dusk, another prison recurred to my mind—a certain foul dungeon in Paris, where innocent women are herded with the vilest of their sex, and where vice and disease stalk rampant. And I felt glad that, although strict discipline prevails at Aylesbury, it is maintained in a humane, unobtrusive manner, which must to a great extent mitigate the horrors of penal servitude.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

XVIII

TO NEW YORK BY LAND

It was on my return to London from Finland that I made the acquaintance of that original and versatile pillar of the Church, the Reverend Forbes Phillips, Vicar of Gorleston, who has found time to produce successful plays in London, notwithstanding his clerical labours in the country. No preacher was ever more sincere and zealous in his cure of souls, and yet I have seen this parish priest keep a crowded supper-table at the Garrick Club entertained until the small hours, (no easy task), with his original views on mankind, and the world in general. One of Phillips's amusing anecdotes is best told as it came from his lips.

"I was called out one night," he said, "to visit a dying man at a lodging-house, in a very low quarter of our town. The poor fellow who sent for me had been given up by the doctor, and I recognized him as a travelling tinker whom I had occasionally seen on my rounds as a curate. But the man had always refused religious ministrations, and I therefore hoped that the approach of death had now changed his views.

"'Sit down, Parson,' said the poor fellow as I entered the squalid garret where he lay dying; 'the doctor can do nothing for me—nobody can—but I've always liked you, though we have not always agreed on religion. Do you mind opening that box under the bed, and giving me the pack of cards inside of it?'

"'But, my dear friend, we don't want cards now——' I began.

"'Oh, yes we do,' he broke in; 'I know I shall soon face my Maker, but He knows everything and you don't—and, for that very reason, I am sure the Almighty will be good to a poor devil like me, who has had more kicks than halfpence. But that's not what I want to talk about. Give me the cards.'

"I reluctantly handed them to him.

"'Now I am going to show you a trick,' he muttered, as he feebly but deftly shuffled the pack, and notwithstanding the incongruous nature of a conjuring feat under the solemn conditions, I was bound to admit that it was a very ingenious one.

"'Yes,' said my friend, 'and you can make hundreds of pounds with that pass at games of chance. I never mixed with rich folk, but you do, and it is your own fault if you don't let 'em know it before they're many weeks older.'"

The worthy vicar's appearance is much more suggestive of a foreign Catholic priest than that of an English clergyman, which was the cause, not long ago, of a rather unpleasant experience. My friend

was on a walking tour through Northern Italy, and one day, while pausing to admire the view from a lonely mountain-peak, he suddenly became aware that a picturesque but wild-eyed native was carefully aiming at him with a blunderbuss from behind an adjacent rock. "I waved my handkerchief," said the vicar, "to signify friendship, but bang went the gun, and a shower of slugs fell around me, luckily, far wide of their mark. This was the last kind of greeting I expected or desired, but, with the 'wisdom of the serpent,' I pretended to be hit, and fell flat on the ground in some long rushes, which enabled me to get at the 'Derringer' with which I hoped to repay the stranger's kind attention, when he came to examine his 'bag.' But no sooner had I covered the ugly mug which peered down at me, than its owner threw down his weapon, and burst into profuse lamentations, and I gathered from the explanation which ensued, that this 'savage mountaineer' had mistaken me for his village priest, who had overcharged him for a funeral." And it was just like my clerical friend to discover a pleasant companion in his would-be assassin, to share the latter's midday meal of cheese and wine, and ride his mule for the remainder of that day's journey!

It was through the well-known novelist, Coulson-Kernahan, that I came to know the hero of the above adventure. Kernahan is famed for his handwriting, which is as cryptic and indecipherable as a

papyrus scroll (I am told mine is not much better), and he once showed me the following note received from a well-known publisher:—

"My dear K——,

"Thanks for your letter. The part I can make out is splendid. The other I find useful as a railway pass, for the collector has to take my word for it, life being too short to prove it isn't one."

The following anecdote related by this indifferent penman, but charming writer, is illustrative of the average British workman's views on literature and its exponents. Last summer some repairs were being done to Kernahan's house, and, the day being sultry, my friend sent out the men a drink and a cigar each at the end of the day's work. As they were leaving the novelist overheard, from his smoking-room, the following colloquy: "Who is that cove what lives 'ere, Bill?" "Well, they do say as he is a —— author, but he don't seem a bad sort of a bloke, and after all we've all got to do *somethink* for a living!" But even this was less trying to bear than a letter Kernahan once received, (written in all sincerity) from his fellow-countryman Frankfort Moore, on the publication of the former's now famous work *God and the Ant*. "Do send me your new book *God and His Aunt*," it ran; "I hear it is quite excellent!"

Returning one morning to Paris (*en route* from

Finland), and while lazily perusing a Sunday paper in the train, the portentous head-line "A projected route from France to America" caught my eye. And this is a striking instance of how a trivial occurrence can change the whole current of a man's life, for, had I travelled on a weekday, I should never have seen the paragraph in question, (it appeared in a Sunday illustrated journal which I seldom read), and the great object of my life might, to this day, remain unachieved. But here was my chance at last. It was proposed by a Franco-American syndicate to prolong an existing line of railway in Alaska as far as the Béring Straits, while the Trans-Siberian line was to be extended to the same point, and the Béring Straits were to be bridged or tunnelled, thus forming an unbroken line of communication between Paris and New York. And all this was apparently to be carried out with the greatest ease and simplicity, notwithstanding the fact that no living being had ever accomplished the whole journey—nor was any pioneer mentioned as being anxious to attempt it! But I had, at any rate, accomplished half the distance, and therefore, on arrival in Paris, got into communication with the promoters of the "All World Railway," who were only too glad to find a man ready to risk his life, (for that is what it amounted to) in the furtherance of their scheme.

Thus, in the summer of 1901, was the ball set rolling, and when once the project was fairly started, I

found no difficulty in inducing Sir George Newnes and Mr. A. C. Pearson to engage my services as special correspondent to their various publications, notably the *Daily Express* and *Wide World Magazine*. In Paris the *Journal* paid for the exclusive right of publishing my letters on the Continent—if they ever reached Europe, which at the outset seemed rather doubtful. The following extract from *The Times* of September 24th, 1901, will show the magnitude of the task which lay before me :—

"PROPOSED OVERLAND JOURNEY FROM PARIS TO NEW YORK

"Mr. Harry de Windt is about to make a second attempt to accomplish an overland journey between Europe and America. On the first occasion, starting from New York, he managed to reach the Asiatic coast of Béring Straits, but owing to his capture and ill-treatment by a Tchuktchi chief he narrowly escaped with his life, and had to return. Now, however, the explorer is receiving assistance from the Russian and American authorities, and next December he will leave Paris and travel by the Trans-Siberian Railway to Irkutsk, which will be reached on December 20th. Thence he will proceed to Yakutsk, a distance of 1500 miles, involving a three weeks' sleigh journey. A fortnight will be spent at Yakutsk, and in the third week of January Mr. de Windt will proceed north-east over un-

inhabited country to Sredni-Kolymsk, the most remote north-easterly settlement of Siberia, on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. This portion of the journey will be attended with considerable difficulty. It is hoped that Sredni-Kolymsk, which has a population of a few natives and a score of political exiles, will be reached in February, and there Mr. de Windt hopes to fall in with Tchuktchi fur-traders returning to the shores of Béring Straits. The expedition will make for East Cape (about 2000 miles from Sredni-Kolymsk), reaching there, if all goes well, in the middle of April. Mr. de Windt will then cross the frozen straits to Cape Prince of Wales, the most westerly point of America, but should the ice conditions not be favourable, the American revenue cutter 'Bear' will, (by arrangement with the Washington Navy Department) convey the expedition across the straits, whence it will return, by way of the Klondike, to San Francisco and New York, which city may be reached in June next. Mr. de Windt's chief object is to survey the country to the north-east of Yakutsk, to which point the Russian Government and a Franco-American syndicate are projecting a railway from Irkutsk. On the American side, surveyors are already working on the northern extension of the Klondike Railway to Béring Strait. Although only forty miles broad, the terrific currents and ice floes preclude the possibility of a bridge connecting the two continents, but American engineers have under consideration the construction of a tunnel."

As the reader may imagine, preparations for such a vast undertaking entailed many preliminary journeys to Petersburg and London, and kept me busy night and day for three months. The late General Trépoff,[1] then Governor of Petersburg, rendered me invaluable assistance by despatching Cossacks to the most remote regions of known Arctic Siberia, in order that supplies of dogs and reindeer should not fail me, while in America I was equally well looked after, as will be seen by the following letter, written by Commodore Melville, one of the few survivors of the ill-fated "Jeannette."

"DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY,
"WASHINGTON, D.C.,
"*October* 14, 1901.

"FRIEND DE WINDT,

"Referring to the last paragraph in my letter of October 3, I took the matter up with Captain Shoemaker as I promised, and I recently got a letter from him giving assurance that help would be given you if it were possible to do so.

"The meat of Captain Shoemaker's letter reads thus:—

"'You can rest assured that I will not lose sight of the matter, and that the "Bear" or "Thetis" will pick him (De Windt) up and bring him to our side in July next. At any rate, one of our ships will look in there and do all that can be done.'

[1] This distinguished soldier, although once greatly maligned in the English press, was one of the wisest and most humane Russian officials I have ever known.

"From this, I should say you can put your mind at rest as to the authorities in the Treasury Department in Washington helping you out with your project, as to the entire success of which project, you have my best wishes.

"Yours faithfully,

"MELVILLE,
"Rear-Admiral and Engineer-in-Chief,
U.S. Navy."

Now, although it is perhaps possible that this railway venture, if crowned with success, would have revolutionized ocean trade and travel to a great extent, many people regarded me as a lunatic for attempting the preliminary journey, especially those who read an announcement, published in several American papers, that I was about to *walk* from Paris to New York! I received, of course, the usual letters of advice from unknown correspondents with no practical knowledge whatever of the countries they wrote about, but which, from a humorous point of view, were well worth perusal, notably one from a French gentleman, who, in the *New York Herald*, repeatedly drew my attention to the fact that he "claimed the paternity of the scheme to unite France and America by rail," and therefore strongly resented my making a rough survey of the ground with dogs and reindeer! Having ascertained, however, that this enthusiast had never visited Siberia, and had not the remotest intention of doing so, I scarcely felt justified in abandoning the journey solely on his account,



DE CLINCHAMP. DE WINDT. HARDING.

The first successful Overland Expedition, Paris—New York, 1901–1902

or so was a log-hut, where you could get hot water, some black bread, occasionally a little salt fish, and nothing else. We travelled in uncovered sleighs, deep, boat-like contrivances, in which the snow would collect during a blizzard, and then melt in the sunshine, soaking us through and through. Occasionally we slept at a post-house, devoured by vermin, on bare boards, such wretched accommodation that we generally posted on throughout the night. Not a very pleasant journey, the reader may say, and yet almost luxurious compared to the one which followed with reindeer, from Yakutsk to the Arctic Ocean—over a month of incessant physical suffering. Here the cold was so intense that it fell to 78 below zero Faht., and it was impossible to rest, even in a hooded sled, for the following reason: in this atmosphere everything in the shape of vapour is instantly frozen solid, and any attempt at slumber therefore coats lips and nostrils with a thin sheet of ice, which gradually thickens, impeding the breath and constantly waking the sleeper. Every eight days or so, we reached a dark and filthy *stancia*, or deer station, where the heat, caused by a blazing fire, would thaw out the ice and rime from hair and beard till it poured down inside our clothing, drenching fur and flannel. This moisture had to dry on, for we never once changed our inner garments throughout that winter. And yet, although we suffered (like every one else up here) from chronic catarrh of the stomach, we never caught cold,

though there must have been plenty of microbes in those noisome, bug-infested deer huts.

I have already described the ghastly condition in which we found a handful of political exiles at Sredni-Kolymsk, a collection of tumble-down log-huts, which some of these poor wretches had only beheld after a journey of *two years'* duration from Petersburg.[1] We reached the place on a glorious day, when snowy plain and forest sparkled like diamonds under a sky of cloudless blue. But the sight of that hell of insanity, famine, and despair seemed to darken the smiling face of nature like a coffin which has been borne into a brilliant ball-room. Imagine a double row of log-huts, plastered with mud, and lit by windows of ice, some of which, detached by age and sunshine, had fallen to the ground. This was the "main street," terminated at one extremity by a crowded graveyard, and at the other by the only decent and weatherproof building visible: the Police Office. That is what we found at Sredni-Kolymsk, the last "civilized" outpost in North-Eastern Siberia, before we entered the unexplored and desolate ice stretch of two thousand miles to the Béring Straits. The place looked at first like a village deserted by trappers, or decimated by some deadly sickness, for there were no signs of life till the tinkle of our deer-bells attracted some gaunt, skin-clad forms from the sheds on either side

[1] See "Darkest Siberia and its Political Exiles," by the author, *Strand Magazine*, April, 1903.

—apparently grey-faced lepers with the vacant smile of idiocy. Here indeed is "God on high and the Tsar far away!"[1] The very air seemed tainted with death and corruption, and much as we had longed, after those miserable days of cold and hunger in the wilderness, to reach an oasis of human life, our one thought now was to leave the place, and forget that we had ever seen it.

I only mention this God-forsaken spot in order to relate an anecdote anent it which has never appeared in print, for the simple reason that the event is of very recent occurrence. But it tends to show how widespread is the power of socialism, and how even Russian political offenders can maintain a secret correspondence with their friends in Europe, from the uttermost ends of the earth. There exists in Shaftesbury Avenue, (on the same side of the road as the Trocadero Restaurant), a certain bookshop—I do not, for obvious reasons, give the proprietor's name, but merely mention that he deals, almost exclusively, in ancient and very valuable literature. I strolled in here one day to inquire the price of a quaint old missal which I had seen in the window, and at once recognized the owner, by his accent, to be of Russian nationality. Having made my purchase, I wrote down the name and address to which the latter was to be sent, and the bookseller, on reading the former, gave a start of surprise. "Are

[1] "God is on high, and the Tsar is far away!"—a proverb in use amongst Siberian exiles.

you the Englishman," he asked, "who has been to that Arctic 'Inferno,' Sredni-Kolymsk?" I nodded in assent. "Then you knew my poor friend S——, he spoke of you in one of his letters." I inquired if the exile in question, whom I remembered perfectly, were still alive. "Alas, no!" was the reply. "He shot himself last year." Yet the Tsar's officials will tell you that only two reindeer-posts arrive at, and leave, Sredni-Kolymsk every year, and that all correspondence from prisoners is rigorously prohibited.

The journey along the coast of the Arctic Ocean was, undoubtedly, the hardest portion of that long and painful voyage. At Sredni-Kolymsk I nearly gave up the voyage in despair, for our own food was practically exhausted, and a journey of two months through a desert of ice lay before us. Dogs were scarce, and lastly, the Tchuktchis, on whom I had relied for food, lodging, and guidance, had retreated eastward along the coast until their nearest settlement was now said to be six hundred miles distant—six hundred miles of desolation, without food or shelter of any description, and with the off-chance of finding no natives at the end of it. But, with great difficulty, I got five sleds together, (three drivers and sixty-three dogs), and set out for Béring Straits, about as suitably equipped for the trip as a man who, in this country, would go out duck-shooting at Christmas time in silk pyjamas. The black bread and frozen fish I obtained at Sredni-Kolymsk (with our

own forty-odd pounds of "pemmican") would last for three weeks, when I hoped to reach the first Tchuktchi settlement. If not, starvation seemed probable, or death from exposure, for our only shelter was a thin canvas tent. We generally steered by the coast, travelling from 6 a.m. until we struck drift-wood—our sole salvation. Sometimes we found it, and sometimes we didn't. In any case, there was never more than sufficient to boil a kettle, and we often went without food through the twenty-four hours, for without a fire to thaw them, our frozen provisions were as hard as iron and uneatable. At night we would crawl into sleeping-bags, and try to sleep in a temperature varying from 35 to 45 degrees below zero, and on those miserable nights, lying sleepless and half starved under our flimsy tent, I sometimes used to think, "Well, this ain't good enough; I will go back!" But morning always found us on the march again, although, at our rate of speed, America seemed as unattainable as the North Pole itself. On land we got along fairly well, but the perpendicular cliffs often compelled us to travel over the sea-ice, where the sleds had to be pushed and hauled over berg and crevasse—about the toughest work I know, for the sun was now becoming blazing hot at midday, and we were drenched all day with perspiration which froze to our bodies at night. Ten days out we were living on a quarter of a pound of "pemmican," and a little frozen fish a day. Then sickness came. One fireless

night De Clinchamp froze his feet badly. Two days later he slipped into a crevasse, while after a bear, and ruptured himself. Then it was my turn with snow-blindness, which caused intense pain, especially when there was no drift-wood, and therefore no hot water to bathe my eyes. For two days they closed up, and I was strapped to a sled. Then one of the dogs went mad and bit several others before we could shoot it. We lost over a dozen this way during the coast journey, probably from hunger and the cold, which was so severe and incessant that a breastplate of ice, formed on our deerskins the day we left the Kolyma, remained there intact until we entered the first Tchuktchi hut, nearly three weeks later, on the eastern shores of Tchaun Bay.

Our greatest trouble was from *poorgas* or blizzards, during which you can't see a yard ahead, while the dogs generally lie down and howl. We met three of these storms, the last one striking us on the twentieth day out, as we were crossing Tchaun Bay. An Arctic blizzard gives no warning, and, though the weather just before was clear and still, in five minutes we were at the mercy of such a tempest that we had to crouch under the sleds. At last it lulled a bit, and for about eighteen hours we floundered on, finally reaching land, exhausted and badly frozen, but safe. Drift-wood and a friendly cavern were handy, or I think some of us must have perished that night, for the only food left was two pounds of pemmican and a little frozen fish for

ourselves and fifty-seven ravenous dogs. By the blessing of Providence I had kept two tins of "Oxo" from our original store in case of emergency, and, though this did not go far amongst six famishing men, the strong broth at any rate kept life, which seemed to be ebbing away, within us. But it did not seem as if we should retain it long, for this was where we should have struck the first Tchuktchi settlement, but when the sun rose next day, not a sign of it was visible. We had lost six dogs on Tchaun Bay, and Stepan had brought along one carcase, so that there was food of a sort for that day. To stop here meant starvation, so we struggled on, growing weaker every hour, and rolling about in the snow dead beat. But, as good luck would have it, that very night we struck a settlement, and the relief with which I viewed even those three filthy walrus-hide huts cannot be described, for they meant salvation from a lingering and terrible death.

But the warmth of our welcome on the American continent almost atoned for all these miseries, even a sojourn of nearly two months amongst my old friends the Tchuktchis—a more hospitable tribe than that which barred my progress in '96. At Dawson City, we met with an enthusiastic reception, and it was the same all the way to New York, for the people of Seattle, San Francisco, and Chicago all lavishly entertained the men who, for the first time, had travelled by land from the Old to the New World. The newspapers, of course, were full of the journey,

and our portraits were published in every 5-cent rag, with the usual disregard to accuracy. A famous outlaw and wholesale murderer, one James Tracy, was then at large in the state of Washington, and one day at Portland, I entered a saloon and picked up a newspaper which lay on the bar. A ragged-looking ruffian, with the most villainous countenance I ever beheld; was depicted on the front page. "Tracy, I suppose," I remarked to the bar-tender; "he looks a pretty tough scoundrel!" "Guess that is not Tracy," said the man, smiling. "Guess that is meant for you!" And so it was!

At last I reached London, where the success of our enterprise had long since preceded me; although that the difficulty of the feat was scarcely appreciated by some of my countrymen is shown by the following anecdote. I arrived late at Euston, at an hour when all the hotels and most of the clubs were closed for the night. So I drove to the Beefsteak Club for supper, and here, seated smoking in solitary state, I found Beerbohm Tree. "Hullo!" cried my friend as I entered, probably disturbing a brown study connected with some important production; "Where have you been all this time?"

"Only round the world," I answered, adding facetiously: "A little trip from Paris to New York by land!"

The great actor slowly nodded, and whilst silently emitting a cloud of cigarette smoke, seemed, as I thought, to be mentally estimating the difficulties

of such a protracted pilgrimage. "Ah, yes," he remarked at length, with a mind probably engrossed by some totally different subject. "Ah, yes; how appalling are the perils of the ocean!"

Almost as disconcerting was the welcome I received the next day from Charles Brookfield, who inquired whether my health had suffered in consequence of lengthened hardships. "Swollen feet are the worst result till now," I replied, "arising from frost-bite." "I am glad to hear that," said Brookie, as serious as a judge. "Most explorers suffer from 'swelled-head' —a much more distressing complaint!"

And here, before finally leaving the subject of exploration, I may say that I am constantly receiving letters from unknown correspondents desirous of knowing how to fit themselves out before proceeding to various parts of the earth. And perhaps my views on the matter may not be entirely valueless, after an experience of over thirty years of travel in climatic extremes of heat and cold. The following hints may therefore be useful to embryo explorers, and save some of them the trouble of personal communication with me in the future. The succeeding remarks do not, of course, apply to the everyday tourist, who is cradled around the globe in luxurious liners and gilded cars, for this gentleman is generally clad in purple and fine linen, and is therefore the just prey of the West End outfitter. I am only addressing those bound for desolate and trackless portions of this earth, where dressing-bags and silk

pyjamas are unknown, and where the fair sex cannot criticize the rags we stand in. And to such as these, who contemplate a dash into tropical or Arctic wilds, my advice is: (1) shun the London outfitter as though he were the Plague, and (2) take nothing from England but what is absolutely necessary. I often shudder to think of the bulky and useless bales of stores and provisions which accompanied my first and second expeditions, the wasted expenditure on which would have purchased a sailing yacht of considerable tonnage, to say nothing of the cost of transport, which would have converted her into a steamer!

No—on starting out from England on a journey of exploration, whether your destination be the jungles of Borneo or the frozen fastnesses of Arctic Siberia, go in the clothes you habitually wear at home, but on no account go without plenty of "Jaeger" underwear, light or heavy as the case may be, (for this is the best and most absorbent flannel I know of), and, when you reach the scene of action, adopt the *outer* clothing worn by the natives—who naturally know more about their climate and its vagaries than you do. Three or four tweed suits of varied thickness are ample for a trip of, say, a year's duration, and for an outer covering I have given up all others in favour of "Burberry," for it has proved to me, time and again, to be the only one I could rely upon to keep out the cold and wet, even after long usage. "Burberry" also possesses the great

advantage that it never causes perspiration; in fact, it keeps out tropical heat as it does the Arctic cold.

Footwear should, of course, be taken to the tropics, but it will scarcely be needed in northern countries, where skin mocassins must perforce be worn instead of shoe-leather, which generates cold and frost-bite. Furs can, naturally, be purchased anywhere north of the sixtieth parallel much cheaper than elsewhere. I once met a man in the Klondike who had paid six hundred dollars for a beaver-lined coat in New York, whereas I bought rather a superior one on the spot for under ten pounds!

Of course there are places where it becomes absolutely necessary to take canned provisions, and this becomes a serious consideration when transport over thousands of miles is limited to a dog or deer-sled. On recent journeys, I have entirely discarded the unwieldy English tins of "Irish stew" and "Bully beef" in favour of a compact little ration case made in France, which contains one dainty and nutritious meal, and is fitted with a heater. The tin band around a wick steeped in spirit is stripped off, and this little lamp will burn even in a strong gale of wind. I forget the name of the makers of this ingenious contrivance, but any Parisian grocery store could probably furnish it. I seldom take biscuits, for bread, or its substitute, is found nearly everywhere—even the Samoyedes make it from birch bark! But on long and tiring work my mainstay is always chocolate, (Fry's milk chocolate is the best),

which I keep in my pocket and nibble at during the day, and I invariably use the pure concentrated cocoa, made by the same firm, instead of tea—than which it is infinitely more sustaining.

So much for the larder, which should not be packed in large cases, but in small, padlocked wooden boxes, each containing twenty-four tins, which can be thrown away when empty, or used as fuel. Wines cannot, of course, be included, by reason of their bulk, and spirits are of no use, (except in sickness) on any expedition—indeed, in intense cold, they can be highly injurious. But the same cannot be said of tobacco, from which I have often derived solace and comfort under the most trying conditions. Every explorer should smoke, not only for his own sake, but for that of his companions, for nothing soothes the temper and promotes harmony like a pipe or cigar. The former is, of course, the most convenient, but those who cannot do without the other can get a cheap and excellent little weed, (specially put up in soldered tin boxes containing twenty smokes each) from the "Marsuma" Company at Congleton in England. This method is my own idea, and any brand could, of course, be treated in the same way; I merely mention "Marsumas" as I generally smoke them on my journeys, and they retain their condition and flavour in almost any climate.

Scientific instruments and sporting implements must, of course, be purchased at home, although if

Siberia be your objective point, be careful to obtain the necessary permit for the introduction of firearms and ammunition into Russia *at least six months beforehand*, or they may be confiscated on the frontier. Indeed, this once happened to me, and I had to purchase an entirely new armoury at Moscow.

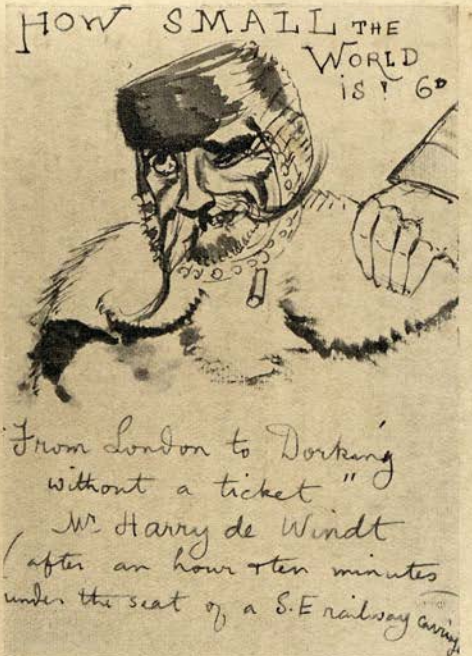
With regard to drugs, I used at first to trust to luck and leave them at home, until informed, some years ago, that I could carry a whole pharmacy in a small handbag. Messrs. Burroughs and Wellcome's tabloids solved this mystery, and I have never since made an expedition without these portable medicines, which are unaffected by climate, and meet the most restrictive conditions with regard to weight and space. The same firm have also made me compressed bandages and dressings which take up very little room, and also provided me with tabloid photographic developers, toners, and fixers ready for instant use by solution in water, and without weighing, an incalculable advantage in the open.

Finally, always use large cornerless leather bags (which secure with a padlock) in preference to portmanteaux, for hard corners are unpleasant bedfellows in a boat or sled. With these few hints, which I trust may prove useful to the inexperienced traveller, I wish the latter every luck on his ventures into the unknown.



The author's portrait, as it appeared on the outer cover of the *Wide World Magazine*. (From a photo taken on the rescue of his "Paris—New York Expedition" on the Shores of Behring Straits)

By special permission of Sir Geo. Newnes & Co.


HOW SMALL THE WORLD IS! 6d
From London to Dorking without a ticket"
Mr Harry de Windt
(after an hour ten minutes under the seat of a S.E railway carriage

Caricature of same by Charles Brookfield

XIX

SOME PLATFORM EXPERIENCES

THE physical ailments arising from my Paris-New York expedition were, unfortunately, not confined to frost-bite, for the protracted fatigue, exposure, and insufficient nourishment necessitated, a couple of years later, a serious surgical operation. But no omelet is made without breaking eggs, and I certainly suffered less, in this respect, than at least one of my companions. Had I taken a much-needed rest on my return to Paris in August, 1902, I should probably have been spared the ordeal by steel, but this was out of the question, seeing that I had to compile, not only several English, French, and American magazine articles, but also a volume of considerable size from the often illegible journals which I kept throughout the journey. Moreover, this literary work had to be completed in less than four months, for in January, 1903, I was under a contract to lecture throughout the United States, under the guidance of that world-renowned impresario—the late Major James Pond. Before sailing for America, I delivered lectures, (illustrated by limelight views), at the

old St. James's Hall in Piccadilly; Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, and other large towns, working hard at proofs when in the train, and even while in bed and at meals. My book was therefore published,[1] and every discourse duly delivered at the specified time, to the accumulation perhaps of my banking account, but to the marked decline of my health and bodily strength. Nevertheless, I now began to taste the sweets of success, for, at every town I visited in the United Kingdom, I was lavishly entertained, made honorary member of several societies and clubs, (amongst others the "Savage" of Leeds and the Newcastle "Pen and Palette"), and, had I not been worn and worried by overwork, should greatly have enjoyed myself, for I generally lectured to crowded houses, my tour having been widely announced by the provincial press. Some people affect to dislike advertisement, but I must honestly own that it afforded me some gratification, and even pleasure, to see my name in gigantic letters on the hoardings, and to read columns of criticism in the local newspapers. For experience has taught me to mistrust people who aver that they dislike to be interviewed, or see themselves in print, since a friend once remarked, "How I should hate to see my photograph published like yours in the illustrated papers!" and, the very next day, eagerly pursued me with a cutting from

[1] See *Paris to New York by Land*, by the author. Geo. Newnes and Co., London.

the *Muddleton Mirror*, in which he figured as having assisted at a local concert! On one occasion, however, I found my portrait, in Arctic furs, wrapped round the bottle of a hair restorer which I purchased at Brighton, and this was perhaps carrying publicity a little too far, especially as I shortly afterwards read the following paragraph in the *St. James's Gazette*:—

> "By way of advertisement of a remedy for baldness, the public's eyes are now blessed with a portrait of a face protruding from a mass of fur, that is presumably the correct wear for Arctic exploration, bearing the legend, 'Read what Mr. Harry de Windt writes'—meaning, doubtless, Mr. 'Hairy' de Windt."

Although the British public evinced considerable interest in our adventures, it was apparently not impressed by the scheme of an all-world railway—indeed, most of the principal English and foreign journals ridiculed the project. Only Mr. Punch seemed to think that it would eventually be realized, as may be seen by the accompanying illustration—the text of which is not, however, strictly correct. For although this stupendous line might no doubt be laid, with much loss of human life and at a fabulous cost, I can see no political or commercial reason why, in face of almost superhuman difficulties, it should ever be constructed. Moreover, we have conclusively proved that the journey by rail would,

even under the most favourable conditions, occupy at least a month, with the off-chance of being frozen to death in the blizzards which in winter constantly rage along the Arctic section. But the scheme is altogether too chimerical to merit serious discussion.

Lectures have become popular in England during the past few years, and every town of any importance now has its literary society which, during the season, engages exponents of various subjects to amuse and instruct its members, and the general public. But it is an arduous profession. I have delivered over a thousand lectures in this country and America, and can therefore realize why so many of my colleagues not only break down, but even occasionally die, under the mental and physical strain. For instance, I was not what is called a "hard worker," and yet I travelled, during four winters, nearly forty thousand miles, and never spoke less than five times a week. An actor's life on tour is infinitely easier, for his work seldom involves the enormous distances which must be covered by the unfortunate lecturer. I remember once appearing at Edinburgh on a Monday, at Glasgow on the Tuesday afternoon, at Torquay and Exeter on the afternoon and evening of the following day, at Leeds on the Thursday—Friday and Saturday at Bedford and Hull, winding up the week for the "Sunday League" at the Alhambra Theatre, Leicester Square; and this kind of thing was not very



"PAST BEHRING"

N.B.—The 10.15 Arctic Express is an hour late.

(According to the *Daily Mail* Mr. Harry de Windt can see no engineering difficulty in the way of the Behring Straits Railway)

By special permission of the Proprietors of "PUNCH"

unusual. On the main lines, with good hotels, such work was endurable, but in remote districts (say of the Black Country), where a change of cars occurred every few miles, and the sole accommodation often consisted of a tap-room, where a dinner of bread and cheese had to be partaken of in the company of genial, but occasionally inebriated loafers, I sometimes questioned whether the game was worth the candle. These evils, however, were mitigated by the fact that I was, at times, entertained at charming country houses, the owners of which, although strangers then, have since become intimate friends, so that the benefits accruing from these "platform journeys" were not altogether restricted to those arising from fame and £ s. d.

When lecturing, I generally travelled alone, in company with a small portmanteau and lantern-slide case, and this was rather lonely at first, though every evening brought new acquaintances in the shape of civic or literary officials, and an audience of fresh faces. Sometimes I was met by the Mayor, but more frequently by the President or Secretary of the Society for which I was to appear—gentlemen who, in small and remote places, often assumed an air of importance and condescension seldom displayed by their colleagues in the larger cities. I was once much amused at B——, a small agricultural town—almost a village—in the south of England, where the Secretary of the local "Literary Society" expressed a hope that I would not fail to "speak

up," (in the village schoolroom), although I assured him that there had been no complaints in this respect, on the previous night, in the St. George's Hall at Liverpool! And the friendly and flattering reception which greeted me on the latter occasion, was rather discounted by the introductory remarks made by my chairman at B——: "The lecturer," said he, "needs no introduction from me. We have all read and delighted in his works of travel, especially the last one descriptive of that terrible land journey of '*five thousand miles*' from Paris to New York! So I shall detain you no longer, but merely call upon Mr.—Mr.—Harry 'Wootton' to tell us all about it!"

I have already said that the laborious occupation of lecturing sometimes drifted me into pleasant places, and this was especially the case when I visited Stratford-on-Avon, as the guest of Miss Marie Corelli at her picturesque, ivy-clad home in Shakespeare's birthplace. And, although we met for the first time, I can never forget the kindness and hospitality which I received at the hands of the most charming and unaffected hostess I have ever known; and a day passed in that quaint Elizabethan mansion, with its indefinable but delightful atmosphere of the "olden time," is certainly the pleasantest memory which I retain of those days "on the road." Another interesting occasion was when I journeyed down, on a Sunday, to entertain a crowded audience at the Poplar Town

Hall. Mr. Will Crooks officiated as chairman, and I recollect that when, during a portion of my discourse, I described a certain ice-bound Siberian settlement as a "hell upon earth," the worthy Mayor leant forward from his chair on the platform, tapped me on the shoulder, and whispered, "Here, surely this ain't right! I always thought hell was a hot spot!" But, as I afterwards discovered, Mr. Crooks dearly loves a joke, although he can, at times, be stern enough, which varied characteristics probably account for the veneration, indeed almost worship, with which he is regarded in the East End. This fact was clearly shown by the conduct of the audience, who appeared to regard their parliamentary representative less as a human being, than a Deity. While writing these memoirs, I wrote to Mr. Crooks, begging him to furnish me, if possible, with any little personal anecdote which might be of general interest, and this is his reply:—

"81 Gough Street,
"Poplar, E.,
"19/8/08.

"My dear Harry de Windt,

"I have just come upon your letter after my holiday.

"All my incidents and adventures are like my brother-in-law's 'Hare Shooting Party.' He shot at it twenty years ago, and every year I visit him I have it all over once more. I know every detail, even up to the way the hare cocked his ears

and looked at the man who missed him. A story of mine lasts, like it, a long while.

"You know I am fairly well known, but I was knocked the other day, standing waiting for a train at Finsbury Park Station, G.N.R., when a man who had been looking hard at me for several minutes came up and said, 'Pardon me, sir, have you ever been taken for Will Crooks?' 'Yes,' I replied. 'I don't wonder,' said he; 'I never saw such a likeness in my life. I was at Dalston just now and pointed you out to the stationmaster.' I then asked, 'What did he say?' 'Oh,' he said, 'he laughed.' I said, 'No wonder!' The man's train came in; I looked solemn; he scratched his head as he got in and exclaimed, 'D——d if I don't think you *are* him!'

"Kind thoughts,

"WILL CROOKS."

With one memorable exception (when I lectured at Aylesbury Prison), I have seldom had a more curious experience than on one occasion at an asylum, where my audience consisted of about a hundred lunatics. It was a palatial establishment, near a large town in the Midlands, and the patients, who belonged exclusively to the upper class, all appeared in evening dress, some of the ladies wearing *décolletée* gowns and beautiful jewels. But only once during the proceedings, (when a gentleman loudly objected to a picture on the screen, and was

gently removed), did anything occur to denote that the assembly was not composed of perfectly sane and well-bred people! The doctor and about twenty guests sat down to supper later in the evening, and I took in a young lady whose excitable manner soon convinced me that she was mentally afflicted—one of the least serious cases, I thought, and therefore permitted to mix with strangers. Nevertheless, I felt rather uncomfortable, and endeavoured to calm and humour my neighbour until the meal was over. The girl was young and good-looking, and her case seemed so sad that, when the ladies had left the room, I questioned the doctor as to its details, and was greatly surprised when my host burst out laughing. "That is no lunatic!" he explained, convulsed with merriment; "that is Miss M—— a guest of ours, and I may also tell you one of the cleverest girls at Girton!"

I now made preparations for my American campaign, hoping that the trip across the Atlantic would restore me sufficiently to enable me to fulfil my contract, for incessant work and travel had worn me to a shadow of my former self, even on my return to civilization. It was arranged that I should "open" in New York on the 15th of January, but shortly before my departure, an incident occurred which nearly cut short my career as a lecturer. One night, while I was at a Sunderland theatre, a fire broke out, which might have caused great loss of life, for, being a Sunday, the place was crowded with miners

and their families, and had not the outbreak been promptly quelled, I should have stood a poor chance, the building being a very old one and the means of exit, even from the stage, exceedingly intricate. However, by the blessing of Providence, a panic was averted, for no one was aware of danger until it was over, except myself and two or three attendants. It needed a good deal of self-restraint to stand fast when a tongue of flame leaped up in the wings, but I stuck to my work as though nothing had happened, though sorely tempted to make a bolt of it and save my own skin. Had I done so at that moment, it might have caused a fatal stampede, and, if not my own end, lifelong remorse caused by the death of others.

Two or three days before sailing from Liverpool, I was invited by a friend at Scotland Yard to accompany him to the neighbourhood of the East India Docks, where he had to execute an arrest, and, although the quarry was not run down, it was interesting to note the marvellous improvements which have taken place in these parts since I visited them twenty years ago. Now, as then, our point of departure was Leman Street Police Station, but I looked in vain for the old landmarks—especially the once notorious "Tiger Bay," a dark, narrow alley, where, only a few years ago, drunken sailors were decoyed and murdered nightly by the ladies of Shadwell and their dastardly male confederates. But "The Bay" and maze of filthy

slums surrounding it have now been demolished, and replaced by, at any rate, outwardly respectable streets and buildings. The dancing-halls, too, in the old Ratcliff Highway seemed much more orderly than they used to be, and there was less drinking and fighting, although rough sailor-men of all nationalities, and their foreign-looking doñas still danced the quaint but graceful Spanish measures unknown elsewhere in England. Police protection is now no longer needed, even by night, in St. George's-in-the-East, where the inhabitants seem more prosperous than in the eighties, and now look askance at the West-Ender who thinks it necessary to visit them in some appropriate disguise. My old friend, George Sims, relates an amusing instance of this, when a young Guardsman, whom he recently conducted round the slums, called at his house in such a disreputable "get-up," that the servant refused to admit him. "My good fellow," said George, who had witnessed the scene from a window; "for goodness sake, go home and put on some decent clothes. My friends down east know how to dress just as well as you do!" And, strange as it may seem, this is indeed a fact, for the latest Paris fashions are often worn in the "Ghetto" for weeks before they are seen in Mayfair.

There is probably no man living in London, outside the Metropolitan Police, with a more varied and extensive knowledge of the East End of London than the popular editor of the *Referee*, or one better

acquainted with the manners and customs of the London poor—criminal and otherwise. And although most of "Dagonet's" experiences are sad and sordid enough, there are others with a certain grim humour. For instance, Sims told me that once, when strolling along the Thames Embankment one summer evening, he paused to listen to the dulcet strains of a Hungarian band, wafted through the open windows of the brightly lit Savoy restaurant. On one of the wooden seats near him was a dishevelled, hatless hag in rusty rags—one of the homeless outcasts to be found here at all seasons of the year. The woman was mumbling and moaning, so much so that my friend approached, and inquired if he could do anything to relieve her distress, or perhaps hunger. "Oh, it ain't 'unger, nor yet pain," was the angry reply. "It's that beastly band up there what plays like this every night up to all hours, and prevents a body gettin' a wink of sleep! Oh, *you* can't do nothink, it's the lore what's at fault!" And the speaker drew her filthy rags around her, and turned peevishly over on her hard, comfortless resting-place, just as Midas might do on his luxurious couch in Park Lane, when disturbed by a matutinal piano-organ!

I travelled to New York in the Cunarder "Lucania," which made the stormy, cold, and comfortless passage generally to be expected in mid-winter. "Imagine the ship, with every pulse and artery of her huge body swollen and bursting

under maltreatment, sworn to go on or die. Imagine the wind howling, the sea roaring, the rain beating all in furious array against her. Add to this the clattering on deck and below, the tread of hurried feet, the hoarse shouts of seamen, the gurgling of water through the scuppers with, every now and then, the striking of a heavy sea upon the planks above with the deep, dead, heavy sound of thunder heard within a vault"—so wrote Charles Dickens on his first passage across the ocean in January, 1842, and it aptly describes our own. Our leviathan, however, would have carried the paddle-wheel steamer which conveyed the immortal author of *Pickwick*, who took no less than eighteen days to reach Boston from Liverpool!

For two days on board the "Lucania," no one ventured into the open, and one morning I learnt that a deck steward, to whom I had entrusted my book and rugs, had been washed overboard by a gigantic wave while I was at breakfast. No attempt was made to save the poor fellow, for no boat could have lived in such a sea. The ship was very empty, but I had a few pleasant fellow-passengers, amongst them Sargent the painter, and V——, a fellow-member of the "Beefsteak," with whom I was able to while away the weary hours at cards, while battened down in bad weather. One is generally glad to meet an Englishman, afloat or ashore, westward of Queenstown, but there was one of my countrymen on board the "Lucania" with whose society I would

gladly have dispensed, for he pestered V—— and myself with his unwelcome attentions, and followed us about the ship like a shadow. This was a slangy, over-dressed youth on leave from some line regiment; the type of military "bounder" who talks about "Heah" and "Theah," and regards a garrison town as the centre of his social universe. Nothing we could do would shake him off, for, like most of his kind, this ubiquitous bore was impervious to the most obvious snubs, and the roughest day was of no help to us, for he was an excellent sailor. But, one night, in the smoking-room, Providence came to our aid. V—— and I were playing *écarté*, with "Southsea," (as we called him), as usual in close, but uninvited, proximity, when a remark was made concerning an incident which had occurred at the Beefsteak Club.

"Dear old Beefsteak!" cried the Bore, aggressively joining, as usual, in our conversation. "Many a jolly night have I had there!"

V—— suddenly looked up, in such blank amazement that he forgot to mark the king!

"But, are you a member?" he gasped faintly.

"Oh, no!" was the naive, but welcome, reply.

"Oh, I see!" said my friend, with a sigh of relief, adding, while appearing to study his hand, with cruel deliberation; "Then I can quite realize how you must have enjoyed your evenings at the 'Beefsteak,' seeing that strangers are never admitted there!"

"Southsea" blushed like a schoolgirl, and, mumbling some futile explanation, got up and left the room. However, this was a parting, and very effective, shot, for during the remainder of the voyage he left us in peace!

XX

I LECTURE IN THE STATES

I HAVE only once met an Englishman who had been rash enough to visit New York on pleasure bent, and he came home, at the expiration of a month, a sadder, if not a wiser, man. My friend left England young and *débonnaire*, but on his return presented an almost middle-aged appearance, acquired by a harassing and futile quest of amusement in a city where, according to our English ideas, it does not exist! For in New York, at dance and dinner party, in restaurant, theatre, or places usually devoted, in older, (and, perhaps, wiser), countries, to mental relaxation, there is here but one topic of conversation—filthy lucre—but one thought in the mind of man, woman, and child—the almighty dollar! And equally, of course, there is no rest, for, even when taking their pleasure in Europe, Americans delight in what they call "hustling," which apparently consists of rushing about in gangs, without definite aim or object, until night or bad weather enforce temporary inaction, and "Dollars" again form the chief topic of conversation. By the way, it would be instructive to know how many people annually become insane on this subject in the United States!

My misguided friend said that his one day of unalloyed happiness was when he re-embarked for England, and, being well acquainted with New York, I can well believe it. For although Americans aver that there is as much enjoyment to be got out of life in their own country as in Europe, who has ever heard of a European making a fortune and settling down to spend it in America! However, I went to the States for work, not play, and, if possible, to take money out of the country, and not to leave it there. The African explorer Stanley's lectures had brought him £30,000, Dr. Nansen's about half that amount, and, although I could not expect to equal these figures, I hoped, at any rate, to do fairly well, seeing that my theme was more or less a local one, and therefore as likely to appeal to the American public as the North Pole or Central Africa.

Of course I lectured under the guidance of the late Major Pond, for in those days it spelt failure to be "presented" by any other agent, and I think the "Major" was one of the most interesting personalities I have ever known, although, on first acquaintance, this stern-looking, grey-bearded individual in rusty black suit and black *sombrero*, which somehow conveyed the dual impression of a High Church parson and bushranger, was somewhat formidable. Nevertheless, from the moment that we met on the landing-stage, up till the famous impresario's sad and sudden death a few months later, I can only recall the pleasantest associations with my mentor,

and I never had a wiser counsellor or truer friend than the man who was the first to organize successful lectures in America, with the invaluable assistance of such men as Sir Henry Irving, Mark Twain, Henry Ward Beecher, Sir Henry Stanley, and in more



CARICATURE OF SIR P. BURNE-JONES. (BY HIMSELF.)

recent times, "Ian Maclaren," Winston Churchill, and Anthony Hope.

But the Major was a man of unconventional ideas and occasionally startling methods, as I was fated to discover on the occasion of my first appearance, before a very large audience, at the Brooklyn Institute. For although I had more or less overcome "stage fright" in England, the thought of facing this multitude of

strangers, which would naturally lack the tolerance and sympathy shown by my own countrymen, was very disquieting. To say that I was nervous, fails to describe the agony of suspense which I suffered on the eventful day, as the afternoon waned, and had I foreseen the *dénouement* of the evening, I should certainly have feigned illness, gone straight to bed, and remained there.

Brooklyn is, as the reader is perhaps aware, some distance from Fifth Avenue, and as it was snowing and bitterly cold, I set out for the Hall with the Major in a closed conveyance, instead of the usual tramcar. We had previously dined well at the Holland House, and I gradually began, under the genial influence of iced "Pommery" and a liqueur, to feel more composed and confident, as we smoked our cigars and conversed on various topics until Brooklyn Bridge was crossed, and we had reached the Institute, —a huge building blazing with light, into which I could see people streaming at every entrance. "A big house," murmured my companion complacently, but I made no reply, for at that moment I suddenly realized that a catastrophe had occurred, so appalling as to deprive me of the power of speech. My manuscript had disappeared.

But my loss did not appear to affect the Major, who sat quietly puffing a cigar while I nervously turned out my pockets and then struck match after match, to search every nook and cranny in the carriage. "What does it matter, anyway?" remarked

Pond; unaware that, without my notes on the platform, I was as helpless as a rudderless ship. The mere thought of addressing such a critical audience without book, desk, and reading-lamp was too terrible to contemplate, when at last I abandoned the search in despair, and, turning to the still placid Major, informed him that, under the circumstances, I could not possibly go on to the platform—and make a fool of myself.

"Then I guess you will pay me a thousand dollars over to-night's show, and our contract is at an end!" was the calm rejoinder; but the artful old Major never meant it, knowing perfectly well, (although I didn't), that in less than a quarter of an hour he would have me on the stage, spouting away for dear life, without even a pencil note to prompt me. Yet this is what actually happened, for my agent had a persuasive way with him, acquired by long experience, which I found it impossible to resist. I don't know to this day how I should ever have got through that ghastly ordeal without the lantern slides, which marked the successive stages of the journey. But I gabbled on at random, with an energy born of despair, and, much to my surprise, was rewarded at the close of the lecture by loud applause, and recalled several times to bow my acknowledgments. For, fortunately, American audiences are, up to a certain point, very long-suffering. Max O'Rell used to relate that once, in Chicago, he was unexpectedly called upon to make a speech at a banquet given to

the French colony, and could think of no suitable poetical quotation to wind up with. So, on the spur of the moment, he invented and declaimed the following lines:—

> La lâcheté ne vaut pas la vaillance,
> Mille revers ne font pas un succès;
> La France, amis, sera toujours la France,
> Les Français seront toujours les Français!

And this senseless balderdash evoked an enthusiastic ovation!

So whatever I said at Brooklyn, (and I fear more than half of it was rubbish), my lecture met with the entire approval of the audience, which is, after all, the main object of a lecturer. The Major was delighted. "Did not I tell you," he said, as we drove home, "that you would not need your book?" "I wonder where it can have got to," said I, still unable to account for its loss, when, to my blank amazement, my companion, with a chuckle, dived into the pocket of a capacious ulster, and produced the missing manuscript. "I took it out of your pocket," he said coolly; "and you can have it now, but only on one condition—that you never use it again. Americans won't listen to the man that reads, and out West they shy bricks or shoot him, Take a fool's advice, old man, and trust to your memory in future." And although it cost me at first an infinite amount of trouble and anxiety, I have adopted this course ever since, with very satisfactory results. The Major used to say (and with

some truth) that he could read a book at home, without having to go out in the cold and hear some fool read it to him. But this, of course, only applied to lectures, and not to "readings" from their works given by Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Mark Twain, and other authors.

I had several letters of introduction for social lights in New York, but I cannot say that I was much impressed by the little I saw of transatlantic society—I mean as regards the exclusive "four hundred"—for the term "Society," in America, applies to such varied classes of the community, that it ceases to retain its European meaning. My great difficulty, (and one which I imagine most Englishmen experience), was to define the very vague border-line which separates the "Bourgeoisie" from (what is called) the "Aristocracy," until the puzzle was solved by the fact that, while the former were generally ultra-patriotic, and somewhat aggressively inclined towards my country, the latter invariably aped English manners and customs, and generally disparaged their own compatriots in favour of my own. This Anglomania was sometimes carried to absurd lengths, as, for instance, when a lady with a pronounced American accent alluded to His Gracious Majesty Edward VII as "Our King!" and a young gentleman declared that he had entirely forgotten the name of his President, although he never failed to remind me that he had once been the guest of an Irish peer!

But it would be obviously unfair to judge all

Americans by the weird doings of a certain "coterie," whose vulgarity, zoological parties, and other social tomfooleries have made them the laughing-stock of Europe. For there are refined and agreeable gentlefolk in America, just as there are in any other country, although they seldom, if ever, associate with "*nouveaux riches*," whose very names proclaim their plebeian origin, but who constantly figure in the columns of "fashionable intelligence." It was my privilege to stay for a few days at a beautiful old place not far from Philadelphia, where everything was conducted on the simple but refined methods which prevail in the best English houses, and without the vulgar display of wealth which I had witnessed in the "cottages" of Newport—palatial mansions, so called in the snobbish endeavour to draw further attention to their fabulous cost. Nor was the reason far to seek, for my host's ancestors had really migrated with the Pilgrim Fathers, and he could, therefore, boast of a lineage honoured in England. By the way, the vessel which conveyed these puritan pioneers across the Atlantic was of very limited dimensions—a mere cock-boat according to modern ideas — yet half a dozen *Mauretanias* would not accommodate the descendants I met of the men who were landed by the *Mayflower!* But to return: Society, in the best sense of the word, does undoubtedly exist in America, but it is confined to a very restricted circle. An American gentleman, (or lady), of good birth and breeding, are as worthy of

the name as their English prototypes; but the same can hardly be said for the naturalized Americans of both sexes and varied nationalities who, of late years, have overrun the United States, and, so to speak, "made their pile there."

An entertaining little work on modern American Society was compiled by my friend, Sir Philip Burne-Jones,[1] while we were together in New York, and the student of human nature will find it excellent reading, the more so that it is written in a tolerant and friendly spirit, yet not altogether without satire. One of the original ideas conceived by the author was to write the word "Society" with an $, a jest which gave much offence in certain quarters where the cap fitted. The artist had a temporary studio in New York, and one day, while I was dining with him, a messenger arrived with a note from a sitter. "What is your name?" said the former, with the engaging freedom of the American lower orders. "Burne-Jones," replied my friend. "Guess I have come to the wrong house, then," said the man. "This letter ain't for you; it's for 'Mr. Bart!'"

I made New York my head-quarters for nearly a month, lecturing at places in its vicinity, and put up at the Everett House, an old-fashioned, but fairly comfortable, hotel in the square of that name near Fifth Avenue. Here I paid the sum of thirty shillings a day for a small, poorly furnished, gaslit

[1] *Dollars and Democracy*, by Sir Philip Burne-Jones.

bedroom, which sum included no attendance, nor indeed anything else. A "coloured man" answered the bell, invariably bringing some iced water (which I did not want), and if this single act of condescension was not rewarded with at least twenty-five



A NEW YORK POLICEMAN

cents, I might ring again and again in vain. My boots were never cleaned indoors, and I had to go out every morning, (rain or shine), and have them polished in the street, (another twenty-five cents). I lived most frugally—two plain meals a day with hock or light claret, and even these cost me over ten

dollars a day. Anything extra was outrageously dear, and my weekly bill was therefore never under, and frequently over, thirty pounds. In London, I could have lived infinitely better on less than half this sum, and it is therefore amusing to hear American travellers grumble at hotel charges in this country, when they cheerfully pay three times as much for very inferior board and accommodation in their own. Of course the "Everett" is only a second-class establishment, and, at the "Holland House" or "Waldorf Astoria," its prices would have been trebled. The provincial hotels were generally execrable, and at these, (as a fellow-lecturer remarked), you could only make sure of obtaining a bed, and two other things—"ice and incivility."

On my second visit to New York, I generally dined at a club of which I was an honorary member, apparently the only place in the city where a decently cooked meal could be obtained at anything like a rational price. There was also a French restaurant off Broadway, of which I forget the name, but where the charges were proportionately moderate, and the oysters and "clam chowder" renowned. And here I generally dined on Sundays, with the late Henry Kemble, who was then playing with William Gillette in *The Admirable Crichton.* Kemble disliked New York even more than I did, as was shown by his reply to a reporter who inquired if he knew many people there. "Yes, sir," replied Kemble, in the deliberate, pompous way he had with unwelcome

strangers; "yes, sir, I know my landlady, my doctor, and the bell-boy; and I have no desire to enlarge my circle of acquaintance!" There was no better company in the world than poor old "Beetle," and I used to look forward to those Sunday evenings, which were generally prolonged until the small hours, bemoaning our exile, discussing absent friends at the "Beefsteak," or listening to my friend's lengthy dissertations on the Lee family, an ancient gipsy stock of which Kemble used to solemnly aver that he was a lineal descendant.

On leaving New York, I struck out for the Western States, viâ Philadelphia and Chicago, and, at the former place, a pleasant surprise awaited me, for on returning to my hotel from the lecture hall, I passed a theatre where the familiar name of "Charles Hawtrey" appeared, in a blaze of electricity, over the principal entrance. Of course I repaired at once to his dressing-room to greet my old friend, and as soon as the play was over, we adjourned for supper to the club, where we remained until a wintry dawn was stealing through the window-curtains. Indeed, I only sought my couch in broad daylight, which, as I was booked for an important lecture to the Geographical Society at Washington on the same evening, was rather unwise, and which as a natural sequence landed me in Washington, after a tiresome railway journey, utterly fagged and worn out by the prolonged festivities of the previous night. Commander Peary, the Arctic explorer, was

officiating as chairman, and received me in the waiting-room. We had not previously met, and, as we shook hands, Peary's keen, searching glance seemed to take in every detail of my appearance, which, I need scarcely add, was hardly at its best. "You are not looking well," he said gravely, after a long pause; "a good deal pulled down, I guess, by your journey. Well, de Windt, I don't wonder! The Arctic takes a hard toll!" which indeed it had, in his case, in the shape of several toes and fingers. But on this occasion, the Polar regions were maligned, so far as I was concerned, although I thought it unnecessary to explain that my haggard experience was due, less to climatic privations, than to the lavish but misplaced hospitality of the most accomplished and popular English comedian of our day!

XXI

SOME AMERICAN NOTES—A NARROW ESCAPE

SEVERAL lectures had been arranged for me in Chicago, but I reached that city just after the destruction by fire of the Iroquois Theatre, (when over five hundred women and children perished), and the authorities had therefore closed every public place of entertainment for a month, on the principle of locking the stable when the horse has gone. So I resumed operations at Salt Lake City, (where I was entertained by a niece of Brigham Young), and thence went on to San Francisco and the Pacific slope, which Californians have every right to call "God's own country," in the winter of the year. Would that we had a Santa-Catalina or Los-Angeles in Europe, or indeed anything approaching the soft, balmy climate of those pleasant white coast-towns of Southern California, whose rose-gardens and green orange-groves are washed by the blue Pacific. For the French and Italian Rivieras are but a poor imitation of this lovely land of flowers and perpetual sunshine.

But the best way to reach this Elysium is by sea, for American railways are best avoided, at any rate,

by ladies and invalids, notwithstanding the alluring pamphlets and pictures published by the tourist agencies. Having often experienced the hot, stuffy cars, with their icy draughts, (which make a man feel like an animated "Omelette à Surprise"), the abominable sleeping-berths, where both sexes are huddled together without any regard to privacy, the familiarity, and often insolence, of the negro attendants, and the unsavoury but expensive *cuisine;* I can safely assert that most lines in the United States are, with two or three exceptions, very inferior, from every point of view, to those on the continent of Europe. In Canada it is different, and I have seldom journeyed under more luxurious conditions than on the "Canadian Pacific Railway." But, in America, the by-laws and restrictions are so frivolous that an Englishman is apt to wonder whether they were not framed by little children, instead of a sober legislature. Thus, for some cryptic reason, I was continually advised by the car attendants to lay in a stock of wine or spirits, as I should shortly be crossing a "prohibitive State," where their sale was illegal. And once, in Pennsylvania, I called for a whisky and soda, and was told that, although this beverage was tabooed, I could have a cocktail—chiefly composed of the spirit I had asked for! Such idiotic regulations would never be tolerated in Europe — save, perhaps, in autocratic Russia! Some Americans aver that they travel with less comfort in England than in their

own country; but this I very much doubt, although their system of checking luggage, direct from the train to its destination, perhaps has its advantages.

Although California is climatically an earthly paradise, its people were, as audiences, a lamentable failure, for out west they generally prefer an itinerant waxworks, or "menagerie," to the most enthralling lecture. One day, in the train, two men in my car caught sight of my name on a poster, as we were entering Sacramento. "Who *is* this De Windt?" mumbled one, with his mouth full of chewing-gum. "Oh, I guess he's the new German juggler what's been in Frisco. We must see him, for I hear he is a 'Cracker Jack'!" And I fear they were sadly disappointed, as were three other gentlemen whom I overheard, on the same evening, while leaving the lecture hall. "Say, 'Jooles,'"[1] said one, "that sucker don't amount to much, let's go to the Dime Museum!" And so it was all through California, especially in the more remote mining towns, where my audience once consisted of an inebriated gentleman ejected from a saloon over the way, two so-called ladies in his train, half a dozen children, and a policeman. This occurred in a mushroom city, where Oscar Wilde had preceded me during his lecture tour in the eighties, and the following is taken from a letter which he wrote from this very town:—

"I am living amongst miners—men working in

[1] "Jules."

metals, so I lecture to them on the Ethics of Art. I read them passages from the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, and they seem much delighted. Only lately, I was reproved by my hearers for not having brought Cellini with me. I explained that he had been dead for some little time, which elicited the inquiry, 'Who shot him?'"

And seeing that a quarrelsome citizen had, the day before my arrival, been removed in this manner, "D——" had apparently little changed during the years which had elapsed since the writer's visit.

But the astute Major Pond had already warned me of a probable frost in California, which I was therefore prepared for, and, happily, it was amply atoned for in Canada, the cities and towns of which I worked from Vancouver to Montreal with great success, especially Ottawa, where I was entertained by His Excellency the Governor-General and Lady Minto. And to my surprise, the former looked as young and active, under the stress of official life and responsibility, as when I had last seen him at Liverpool, performing between the flags as the popular gentleman rider, "Mr. Rolly," more years ago than I care to recall.

But although nothing could have exceeded the warmth of my welcome at Government House, the lecture was, on this occasion, and through no fault of my own, a terrible fiasco. My lantern operator had always been a model of sobriety, but in Ottawa, for some unaccountable reason, he indulged so freely in

local vintages that, when the time came to fulfil his duties, the man was absolutely incapable of speech or movement! I had spent the day and dined at Government House, so remained in a state of blissful ignorance as to my assistant's condition until I reached the platform. Shortly afterwards the Governor and Lady Minto entered, and took their places to the strains of the National Anthem, and I was proceeding as usual to eulogise the first slide, (the Parisian *Arc de Triomphe*,) when, to my surprise, a titter ran through the audience, and I glanced over my shoulder to find that I had been unconsciously praising the architectural beauties of a dead reindeer, displayed upside down. Nevertheless, I continued, hoping that the next picture would right matters, but it never came—there the defunct animal remained, notwithstanding all my endeavours to attract the attention of the operator. At last, and naturally much annoyed, I left the platform, to find, on reaching the lantern, that its manipulator was slumbering peacefully, but leaning so heavily against the former, that it presently fell to the floor with a loud crash. Then followed a scene of indescribable confusion, during which one of the A.D.C.s, with commendable promptness, rushed to extinguish the gas, and raise the fallen artist, who, on regaining consciousness, first challenged me to a personal encounter, and then fell on my neck and burst into tears. At length the inebriate was removed with some difficulty, and I resumed the lecture with the

aid of the versatile A.D.C., who made an admirable operator, although the lens was now disfigured by a fracture right across its surface. And no one was more amused than Lord Minto, who, at the close of the evening, laughingly assured me that he had thoroughly enjoyed himself, more, I fear, by reason of its absurd interlude, than of the lecture itself!

My tour concluded at Boston, where I renewed my acquaintance with Richard Mansfield the actor, whom I had previously met in 'Frisco in '96, on my return from Béring Straits. Mansfield, (who died only last year), was the Irving of America, and his productions were mounted with the same lavish splendour, and scrupulous regard to detail, as those of our illustrious and lamented Tragedian. My friend was about to produce *Ivan the Terrible*, an historical drama, and knowing of my association with Russia, he invited me to accompany him to an old curiosity shop, and assist him to select the jewellery most suitable for his adornment as the famous Tsar. The costly and beautiful treasures we inspected were, I thought, of a prohibitive price, but, in less than half an hour, Mansfield had purchased a necklace of great antiquity which had been purchased from a private collection; an exquisite Greek cross encrusted with jewels, and one or two other enamelled gems of the Byzantine period, of a value and rarity which I have occasionally seen in a public museum, but certainly never on the stage. But, as I have said, my friend mounted his plays regardless of cost.

which fact, coupled with the man's histrionic talents, probably accounted for his universal success and popularity; I should perhaps add, with the general public, for he had an abrupt, almost uncouth, manner which, (as only his friends were aware), concealed a kind and generous nature. Mansfield, although an Englishman, had no great liking for his native land—perhaps because it generally failed to appreciate his talents. But he was chiefly known, in London, as the dual impersonator of Jekyll and Hyde in Louis Stevenson's weird masterpiece, and would probably have met with far greater success had he produced such plays as *Beau Brummel, Cyrano de Bergerac,*[1] and *A Parisian Romance,* which have won him undying fame in the States. Maurice Strakosch, the distinguished critic, was present at Mansfield's first performance, and declared that the, then, unknown actor would one day be the idol of America, which, indeed, he eventually became.

My visit to the "curio" dealer's was indirectly the cause of a very unpleasant experience, which befell me the same evening. While in the shop, I noticed a tall, foreign-looking individual, whom I had seen lounging about the hotel. The stranger seemed much impressed by the reckless manner in which Mansfield doled out greenbacks, and, having seen me lunching with the actor, evidently assumed that I, also, was endowed with great wealth. Every

[1] Produced in New York at a cost of nearly $50.000 (£10.000).

Crook and Bunco Steerer in Boston knew my companion by sight, and were well aware that such an old stager was not to be caught napping, but I was an Englishman, apparently of the tourist type, and therefore probably rich, and careless—so far as personal property was concerned. But I was very busy that day, and the fact that, when I went to dress for dinner, the stranger accompanied me into the elevator and watched me enter my apartment, had, for me, no unusual significance.

It was past midnight, and the corridors of the Hotel Bellevue were in semi-darkness, when I retired to my apartment on the eighteenth floor. I was very tired, and omitting, for once, to bolt the door, I threw myself on the bed for a few moments, before undressing, and without turning off the electric light. Then I must have fallen asleep, for I awoke to find that two of the lights had been extinguished while I dozed. The door also, which I had closed, was now ajar, and, with a vague sense of danger, I jumped off the bed to see that my watch was still where I had laid it upon the dressing-table. But before I could reach it, a click was heard, and I was in total darkness, also, presumably, in strange company. Without a moment's hesitation, I made a dash for the door, secured it, and switched the room full of light, and there stood my sallow-faced friend of the "curio" shop, now clad only in trousers, shirt, and slippers. An ugly customer, thought I, as I quickly covered the spare, athletic figure with a

"Browning," but the fellow, with a deprecatory gesture, threw up his hands. "For God's sake, sir, don't shoot!" he cried. "It is all a mistake; come to my apartment and I will prove it. Oh, Madre de Dios! what shall I do? What will my poor wife and children say, if any harm should come of this?"

I bade the intruder turn his face to the wall and stand motionless while I inspected my property—an order which was meekly obeyed. Everything, much to my surprise, was intact; and I began, therefore, to wonder whether, after all, the man had not spoken the truth. "You can turn round," I said at length, "and now you will give me your name and proofs of your identity, or I shall summon assistance and give you in charge."

"Certainly," said the stranger eagerly. "My name is Pedro de Castro, a Spanish merchant, and I live in West 49th Street, New York. Come to my room, sir, and you shall see my visiting cards, portraits of my family, a dozen proofs of my integrity!"

And I did so, closely following my midnight visitor with the "Browning," only to find his assertions absolutely verified. The bed had not been occupied, but de Castro drew a gold watch and well-lined pocket-book from under the pillow, and showed me a jewelled frame containing a miniature of a refined-looking, well-dressed woman, and his children. It was now my turn to feel uncomfortable as I murmured an excuse for my peremptory behaviour, but de Castro treated the whole affair as an excellent

joke, vowing that, under the circumstances, he would have acted precisely as I did. So we parted excellent friends, after an acceptance on my part to dine with my new acquaintance and his family, the following week in New York.

And here the matter would have ended, had I not, the next morning, casually mentioned my overnight adventure to the manager of the hotel. He looked uneasy for a moment, and then despatched an attendant to inquire if Mr. de Castro was visible. But the darkie returned with a broad grin on his face. "Skipped," he said, laconically, and the clerk rushed to the telephone to summon the police, while I was requested to await the arrival of a detective. "What was he like?" asked the latter, and I described, to the best of my recollection, the pale, gaunt features of my visitor. "I thought as much," was the reply. "Come away down to the bureau, and I think I can show you his portrait!" Ten minutes later, I was examining a life-like photograph of Mr. de Castro, taken, (*à la Bertillon*), from four separate points of view, and selected from a batch of many other scoundrels in the Boston "Rogue's Gallery."

"So that is your friend, is it?" said the detective. "Well, you have had a close call, for that is about the toughest character in the States. He ain't no Spaniard, only a Mexican half-breed, who works as an hotel thief—what we term a 'Chloroformer.' A few months back, he was released from an eight

years' sentence for the murder of a drummer in Sacramento. The man's real name is Santos, but he is known amongst his friends as 'El-Ahoga,' or 'The Strangler,' on account of his strength, and the people he has put out with his hands in Mexico. Why, he could have settled you, gun and all, just as easy as I can squeeze an orange. Why didn't he? Well, you see, the 'boodle' wasn't worth it, and Santos only runs for big stakes. Now, if that mahogany case of yours had contained diamonds, (which Santos probably thought it did), instead of lantern slides, they'd be measuring you for a wooden suit by this time! You can thank your stars you ain't a 'drummer'!"

And I do!

XXII

I LUNCH WITH PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT—A RUSSIAN MASSACRE

ONE morning at the Everett House, a few days before I embarked for England, an official envelope was handed to me by a Government messenger. It contained an invitation from the White House to lunch with the President, which I gladly accepted, being not only anxious to make the acquaintance of so famous and interesting a personage, but because I knew that the latter had taken some interest in our overland journey. So I set out the next day for Washington, in company with a personal friend of Mr. Roosevelt, who had been deputed to conduct and present me.

It was a grey, wintry day, and I was not favourably impressed by the interior of the White House, which, as we entered, seemed aptly named, and presented a rather cheerless appearance with its cold, whitewashed halls, and massive stone pillars. But the dining-room, to which we adjourned, was a snug and inviting apartment with, instead of the usual headachy heating-apparatus, an open hearth where blazing logs flickered fitfully on wainscoted walls

and the china and silver of a round table laid for lunch. The latter was quite an informal affair; our party consisting of Miss Alice Roosevelt, (now Mrs. Longworth), Waldo Story the artist, the personal friend aforesaid, and two or three members of the household. Everything was done strictly *à l'Américaine.* Miss Roosevelt dispensed tea, (which, in the States, is often served as well as wine at the midday meal), and we ate off polished mahogany instead of the usual white tablecloth, another old-fashioned American custom, the menu being also chiefly composed of national dishes.

It was a delightful meal, chiefly by reason of its cheerfulness and absence of ceremony, for the President, although he had, as usual, risen at dawn, and been busily engaged all the morning with affairs of State, seemed as gay and light-hearted as a schoolboy. I sat beside my host, whose conversational powers and magnetic personality fully explained the popularity which their beloved "Teddy" enjoys amongst all classes, and although somewhat stouter than his portraits had led me to expect, his movements had all the grace and energy of those of a lad of twenty. In short, Mr. Roosevelt looked as hard as nails, (a condition probably due to early physical training), and the man's character was written on his face—shrewdness and a glint of humour in the keen, restless eyes, inflexibility of purpose in the mouth and chin, which might have been hewn out of marble. One priceless gift, at least, the President

shares in common with our own gracious Sovereign, —that of tact; for I seemed to know the former as well, in five minutes, as though we had been old acquaintances.

Although the cares of State must weigh heavily, even on Mr. Roosevelt's broad shoulders, he has a quiet dry humour, which, had fate called him to a less exalted station, would have made him an admirable comedian. Indeed, I found his quick unexpected way of dropping a grave and weighty topic of conversation for fun and banter, *pure et simple*, somewhat disconcerting, for the President can keenly appreciate a joke, without moving a muscle of his countenance; and it is often difficult to know whether he is in jest or earnest. But I was perhaps most impressed by my host's marvellously accurate knowledge of Arctic Alaska, which, although he had travelled over most inaccessible regions of the great North-West, the President had never visited. I remember we spoke of Nome City, where there had recently been a flagrant case of "graft," and I remarked that I should never have suspected a certain official, with whom I was slightly acquainted, of dishonesty. "Ah, well!" said Mr. Roosevelt, with the hearty laugh of one who has cracked many a joke over the camp-fire; "Most men are 'Angel Gabriels' till they are found out!"

Then we drifted on to the topic of Siberia, and the President seemed to derive infinite amusement from the idea of connecting the two continents by rail,

and especially when picturing the condition in which unfortunate passengers might be expected to emerge from the train, after a breakdown in the glacial neighbourhood of Béring Straits! Nevertheless, at parting, Mr. Roosevelt gravely commissioned me, (with a twinkle in his eye), to place a car at his disposal on the first Paris-bound express, but the moment after had dropped all levity, and warmly shaking my hand, said some kind things anent (what he was pleased to call) our "great journey," and its accomplishment, which, coming from such lips, I shall never forget. The thermometer that day was unpleasantly near zero, with snowflakes flying, and the roads like glass, but our host left the table to start out forthwith for his afternoon ride, which the aide-de-camp in attendance seemed to anticipate with far less pleasure than his august chief. So began, and ended, my acquaintance with one of the most attractive and interesting men I have ever known, and with probably the most able and popular President ever elected by the American people.

Most Englishmen who visit the States, even for a short time, acquire the accent more or less, and I was no exception to the rule, for on my return I unconsciously prefixed short sentences with "Say," and committed other conversational delinquencies, which it took several weeks to eradicate. There are, of course, few things more unmusical to our ears than an American twang, but I cannot help thinking that some of the terms used across the

Atlantic are more expressive than our own. Take, for instance, the word "side-walk" compared with "pavement," (which latter might signify any portion of a thoroughfare); or again, "race-track," which is surely more descriptive than our word "course," and the verb "need," which, with us, can only be expressed by "I want." But these are, of course, only isolated cases, and the majority of American expressions, such as "yep" for yes, "cinch," "gotten," and "fall," are most undesirable substitutes, although I believe the two latter were actually used in some parts of England, more than a century ago.

The last important journey which I undertook was throughout the Balkan Provinces and Southern Russia, on behalf of the *Westminster Gazette*,[1] a couple of years ago. I was accompanied on this journey by a bioscope artist, one Mackenzie, a canny Scot from Inverness, who was commissioned by the "Urbanora Company" to obtain living pictures of men, manners, and customs in the Near East—a portion of Europe so interesting and accessible, that I cannot understand why, in these days of cheap and luxurious travel, it is not better known. Montenegro is really the only place where communication and accommodation fall in any way short of the European standard, but the interior of this little country, which is only about half the size of Wales, is such a chaos of mountains that quite

[1] *Savage Europe*, by the author. Fisher Unwin and Co., London.

a third of it is as yet unexplored. There are no regular post-roads, though Cettigne, the capital, has a fair hotel, and you can go almost everywhere, unarmed, without fear of molestation. Cattaro, (on Austrian territory), is the gateway to the land of the Black Mountain, better known here by its Slavonic name of Tsernagora than its Italian corruption, "Montenegro." Twenty-seven forts now command the inlets which divide Cattaro from the sea, and as I wrote at the time: "If appearances go for anything, Austria has 'come to stay' in these parts"—a prophecy partly verified by recent events in the Near East. The "spy mania" was rampant here, and it was therefore impossible to look at, much less sketch or photograph, any military buildings in, or round, the town without exciting suspicion, the more so that, shortly before our arrival, an Austrian Archduke, travelling incognito, had been arrested, merely for carrying a "Kodak" near military ground. Knowing, therefore, that Mackenzie would cheerfully have descended the crater of Vesuvius in his ceaseless pursuit of illustrated copy, I begged my companion to abstain from even approaching a sentry-box, and to confine himself exclusively to the study of peaceful life. We then parted, and that my friend followed my instructions to the letter, is shown by the following incident.

Every street in Cattaro leads to the Quay, and here, towards evening, I found a crowd assembled to witness the funeral of a distinguished official. And

I, also, lingered to watch the gloomy procession, as it emerged from an archway in the city walls to thread its way, like a dark sluggish river, through that brilliant array of native costumes and showy uniforms. It was an impressive scene; the hearse a huge pyramid of flowers, preceded by dark-robed priests scattering incense, and chanting the solemn requiems of the Greek Church. Then came the mourners, a procession perhaps half a mile in length, with, here and there, a silver cross or silken banner borne high above a forest of flickering tapers. Presently, I noticed a strange object, an oblong wooden case, evidently weighty, for it swayed wildly about, often at a perilous angle, over the heads of the crowd. The casket, I assumed, contained some personal relic connected with the patron saint of the town, for it seemed to excite unusual interest. Impelled by curiosity, I pressed forward for a closer inspection of the mystery, which, when solved, nearly sent me reeling amongst the gaping bystanders. For there, with a melancholy expression assumed for the occasion, and which hardly tallied with the gay "heather mixture" suit beneath it, was Mackenzie, staggering under a ponderous camera, which, not having previously seen, I had not unnaturally mistaken for some sacred emblem! Disregarding my friend's furtive wink of recognition, (which I feared might excite the resentment of the crowd), I fled from the spot, and we did not meet again until dinner-time, when the imperturbable Scot announced that he had

obtained a "graveside" picture, but that it lacked "life and animation," which, under the circumstances, was perhaps not surprising!

Our journey occupied three months, during which we visited Belgrade, aptly named the "White City of Death," since the brutal assassination of its martyred King and Queen; Sofia—that seething little cauldron of international intrigue—and Bukarest, the city of pleasure, which is not unlike Paris seen through the wrong end of a telescope. Then I went on to Russia, prudently bidding farewell to Mackenzie and his camera, (which in Russia would have proved a veritable "infernal machine"), at the frontier.

I passed through Odessa, Tiflis, Kieff, and Kharkoff, and experienced, in every city, the sense of distrust and vague apprehension which affects even women and children during a great political uprising. In Odessa, you had only to ask your way in the street to excite suspicion. In Tiflis, a bomb exploded near my hotel. In Kieff, I stood near a silver-laced colonel gazing into a shop-window, and the next moment saw him lying on the pavement, with a bullet through his brain. In Warsaw—but I reached the latter on the eve of May Day, 1905, when numbers of innocent people were butchered by the soldiers of the Tsar, and will therefore briefly describe my experiences on that memorable occasion,

A palatial hotel is not generally associated with infernal machines, but on the fatal day, while lying in my luxurious bedroom at the Hotel Bristol, I was

startled by a terrific explosion. "An earthquake," was my first thought, for the whole building trembled and rocked under the force of the concussion, until a German waiter, entering with the matutinal *café au lait*, and inured by custom to such trifles, merely murmured, "We shall have plenty more of those to-day," as though the bomb had been a Christmas cracker. I assumed, therefore, that, if this was accounted nothing, I was, journalistically speaking, "in for a good thing"; especially as the gold-laced porter had told me, on arrival, that two thousand "mandarines"[1] had been secretly manufactured, and concealed for use, in various parts of the city! Policemen having entered to close my shutters, I dressed, went downstairs, and felt as though I was in some beleaguered town, for the generally crowded vestibule was deserted, save by newspaper correspondents, business men, and others who could not get away into the country, where most of the upper classes had taken refuge. And yet, outwardly, Warsaw was *en fête*. It was not yet midday, but the flag-lined streets were thronged with gaily dressed workpeople, church-bells pealed merrily above the strains of martial music, and a cloudless blue sky lent additional glamour to the scene of festivity, where, nevertheless, the presence of death seemed already to darken the bright spring sunshine. The streets reminded one of some weird feast-day during the Terror, when the *sans-culottes*, with their

[1] A slang term for bombs used by Russian anarchists.

wives and daughters bedecked in gaudy finery, danced and made merry, in the very shadow of the guillotine. For, collectively, that May-Day demonstration was, apparently, an enjoyable holiday, although, individually, every face wore the set, serious look more befitting a funeral. Even little children, who had heard their elders talk, seemed vaguely conscious of an impending disaster, and babbled among themselves of the soldiers who were to take part in it.

There were sixty thousand troops under arms that day in, and around, Warsaw, and the sight of regiment after regiment, patrolling the streets in glittering array, was, in itself, worth a journey from London to witness. And this was the only traffic, nothing but the steady tramp-tramp of the line, or clatter of cavalry, as serried ranks of grey-coated infantry slouched by with, at intervals, a smart squadron of scarlet dragoons or sky-blue lancers. But not a word was heard in that dense crowd, only a sullen silence, save when some black-skirted, silver-braided Cossack galloped madly by, with despatches, on a rat-like pony, scattering the crowd right and left; or a "Sotnia" of his kind staggered by without order or discipline, for the "Kazak's" only chief is the "Tsar," and a more pretentious and arrogant bully does not exist. He is also sadly deficient in humour. For instance, a smiling, chubby-cheeked street-boy near me called out some harmless jest, and, like lightning, some swarthy ruffian from the Don reined

up, and the poor child jumped into the air with a shrill scream of pain, as a cruel *nagaika*[1] curled round his little body with the crack of a pistol. A London crowd would have torn the brute in pieces.

The heat was terrific, and having despatched a midday wire, I returned to the "Bristol," only to rest for a while, for not a meal was obtainable that day in the hotel, nor anywhere else, for love or money. Had any man sold a loaf of bread, his house would have been attacked by demonstrators, whose only aim, however, was to peacefully assert their rights. But in a secluded apartment, the manager of the "Bristol" clandestinely dispensed drinks and cigars, and here I found some cavalry officers examining an empty bomb which had been brought in by the police. The missile was of aluminium, about six inches long by four in diameter, with a thin paper partition dividing muriatic acid from nitro-glycerine. In the latter a leaden ball is placed, so that, when the missile strikes the ground, the former bursts through the paper, causing explosion. Having consumed a much-needed cognac and soda, I sallied forth again, ostensibly to view the monster procession of thirty thousand men which, starting from the poorer quarters, would have marched, in quiet and orderly array, to the Governor's palace. But it never appeared—

[1] A very severe whip carried only by the Cossacks.

only a remnant—one man, pale and breathless, his clothes in rags, tore through the crowd, crying out that a fight was in progress near the Vienna Railway Station—sixty already killed and wounded—women and men. Some one, he gasped, had foolishly shown a red flag, contrary to the regulations, and this was the torch which kindled the conflagration, and caused a general massacre. From about four o'clock, murder was let loose, and news of fresh conflicts came in every hour. At five o'clock, a number of people were killed by the soldiery in the Tasnovaulitza; an hour later, I learnt that men, women, and children had been shot down *en masse* in the suburb of Praga, (across the Vistula) by the Lithuanian Regiment. Here about forty unfortunate victims were slain, who had merely strolled out to witness the manifestation. And so the carnage went on until nightfall, and darkness put an end to further atrocities. But even now, at intervals, parties of Cossacks galloped past the "Bristol" with yells, and a cracking of whips, and we knew that more bloodshed was in progress. Late in the evening, a number of us were sitting in the hotel wondering what had become of all the threatened bombs, when one burst in a street close by, near a picket of Cossacks, killing three of the latter and a policeman. And this, (so far as I know) was the final tragedy, and occurred about half-past ten o'clock at night.

Just before retiring to rest, I was smoking a cigar outside the hotel, when I noticed a springless cart,

escorted by soldiers with fixed bayonets, crawling along the moonlit street. "Some of the dead from Praga," said the porter, and I followed the gruesome cortège into the courtyard of a police station, (now converted into a mortuary), not far away. A rouble note to the sergeant in charge enabled me to enter, and examine the vehicle more closely, also its ghastly burden, under a sheet of coarse tarpaulin. This was presently unroped, and torn aside to disclose four bodies: three men and a woman, the latter a girl of about sixteen, slim and fair-haired, dressed in dainty white serge, with mauve ribbons, now discoloured, at her throat and wrists. "Poor little thing," remarked one of the escort, not unkindly. "That was bad luck. We shot her by accident. Heaven rest her soul!"

The four bodies were borne underground to a cellar, where electric lights, temporarily suspended from the roof, shed a garish glare over rows of unclaimed dead. Men and women lay just as they had been thrown, some lying over one another, in the confined space, and, though most of their faces showed no trace of pain or terror, others were horribly disfigured by the butt-ends of rifles. Most of them belonged to the poorer class, and I saw only one apparently of superior rank: a lady who had evidently put on her smartest gown and jewellery to attend some select and fashionable function, on the fête day which had proved her last. The air was oppressively close and fetid, notwithstanding the

pungent smell of freely-shed carbolic acid. I have witnessed many other sad scenes in the darkest recesses of the Tsar's great Empire, but never one more ghastly and pathetic than that row of livid, upturned faces, mutely calling to Heaven for the vengeance which must, one day, surely come.

A few weeks after my return to England, I began to develop symptoms of a mysterious malady which, notwithstanding the advice of numerous physicians, and trials of countless remedies, (including a so-called "cure" at Vichy), became gradually worse. No one seemed able to diagnose the disease, which gave me no actual pain, but merely a sense of incessant bodily discomfort, coupled with physical weakness, and a rapid and alarming loss of weight. At length an operation was decided upon, and I don't think I ever had a sharper attack of

"What schoolboys denominate *funk*,"

than on that dull, foggy autumn morning, when I was led, swaddled in blankets, into the operating-chamber, with its ghostly white-sheeted walls, and odour of anæsthetics, which latter clung to my nostrils for weeks afterwards. "Nothing serious," said the distinguished surgeon, when it was over, "merely an adhesion"; but over a month elapsed before I was about again. The operation of opening the abdomen is never a pleasant one, and yet it was, in some ways, an interesting experience. I had planned, that winter, a sleigh drive across Lapland, and this had, of course, to be abandoned. It was

therefore consolatory to reflect that this would have been a pleasure trip compared to my previous journeys, a mere tourist excursion, and not a serious geographical undertaking. Nevertheless, the following pathetic little poem appeared in the "By the Way" column of the *Globe*, and I now take the opportunity of thanking the writer, (who is unknown to me), for his expression of sympathy; not only on behalf of myself, but of the zoological population of the Arctic:—

"A FROST

(Mr. Harry de Windt has been compelled to abandon his projected Arctic expedition this year.)

The Polar bear is not himself,
The Esquimaux are sad,
The northern lights are growing faint,
The skua-gull feels bad.
A sorry grin the sleigh-dog's face
Has marked with sorrow's tint,
The seal is off his feed because
He misses H. de Windt.

Laplanders hear the icebergs boom
('Tis all the boom they'll get),
The penguin cannot be consoled,
The whale is quite upset.
"Another year must pass before
We see ourselves in print,"
These wretched beings cry. Oh, how
They miss their H. de Windt!"

But if the Eskimos were "sad," and the whale

"upset," I was perhaps more so, at having to forego the pleasure of meeting them.

Before closing these memoirs, I should perhaps say that I have not mentioned, in this work, anything like all the places I have visited in the world, over the surface of which I have travelled, from first to last, considerably over a million miles—and nearly 50,000 of those without the aid of steam. For reiteration is always tiresome, and although I have been to such cities as, say, Stockholm, Petersburg, Cairo, or Constantinople dozens of times; and made little side-trips to Morocco, Greece, and around the Black Sea, I have only, in this volume, referred to my more important travels, the details of which have not, I hope, wearied the reader.

"Shall you ever make another great journey?" is a question often asked me by friends, and one which I should certainly answer in the affirmative, were it not for ominous twinges of rheumatism, and other danger-signals, which warn me that the human frame, like the motor-car, has its limits with regard to space and usage. But queer things happen in this world, and it may be that I shall yet make one more flight into the terrestrial unknown—though not on so large a scale as its predecessors. For it were surely better to die in harness, with Nature for a nurse, and the open sky above you, than to see death slowly approach, inch by inch, through the stifling atmosphere of a sick-room. When elderly croakers, therefore, remind me that I am not so young as I was, and enforce

their remarks by quoting from that time-worn and dreary "chestnut": *The Pitcher and the Well*, I am sorely tempted to reply, (in the words of Lindsay Gordon):—

> Take care of yourself, dull boorish elf,
> Though prudent and safe you seem,
> Your pitcher will break on the musty shelf,
> And mine—by the dazzling stream!

December 5th, 1908.



WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON, LTD.
PRINTERS, PLYMOUTH

~~XX le e 6~~ 923.
Windt, Harry & Win/Win/1
My Restless Life
1909 225-70

B 861 3/9/58 -/1 2

00022570

Digitized with financial assistance from



HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018